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THE STORY OF THE BRITISH NAVY

HAROLD F. B. WHEELER

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BRITISH NAVY



THE STORY OF THE BRITISH NAVY

BY

HAROLD F. B. WHEELER

F.R.Hist.S.

FOUNDER OF "HISTORY"

AUTHOR OF "STIRRING DEEDS OF BRITAIN'S SEA-DOGS" ETC.

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THE STORY OF THE
BRITISH NAVY
TO MY NEPHEWS
JAMES ALICK & WILLIAM HAROLD
A TRIBUTE OF AFFECTION



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Foreword

THERE are few stories that bear retelling so often as the subject of this volume. The youthful scholar who wrote that the British Isles were lumps of land surrounded by the Navy was undoubtedly wrong in letter but equally right in spirit. During the World War the long and critical submarine campaign made us remember when little else was stirring at sea that somebody somewhere was combating the menace with something. In the Court of Last Resort it was felt that the essential Front was the North Sea. Though the whole of the Continent went to Germany and perdition, the "lumps of land" would remain inviolate, provided they were "surrounded by the Navy." The first man and the last unit who fought in France, in Belgium, in Italy, in Gallipoli, in Eastern Europe, in Egypt, in Mesopotamia, in Africa, in Palestine, in the islands of the Pacific, did so by the grace of the British Navy. That good grace is the priceless heritage of centuries, to be treasured from generation to generation and passed on untarnished and unimpaired.

The full and complete story has never been told. It never will be told. The theme is too vast, and in some phases too controversial, for an individual to grasp even in a lengthy lifetime, though the compiler be gifted with the memory of a Macaulay, the energy

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of a Wells, and the winged pen of a Hardy. Many and valuable attempts have been made to resurrect the squadrons of yesteryear, to catch the spirit of the men who made them, and worked them, and sometimes perished with them; to conjure up the romance, the agony and bloody sweat sacrificed on the altar of Sea-Power; but "the half was not told." All the following pages can hope to do is to indicate in outline the more important phases of a varied and fascinating subject, "lest we forget."

It is a matter of common knowledge that one of the compensations of memory is its inability to recollect the unpleasant with so keen an intensity as the pleasurable. Perhaps that is why we fail to learn so many of the lessons of history. We buy our experience in a dear market and then cut our losses. There is a school of philosophy which believes that all thoughts of the travail of national and international upheaval are best relegated to limbo with the events that occasioned them. If the war that was to end war had accomplished its idealistic mission the theory would need no refutation. As it did nothing of the kind we cannot beat our swords into ploughshares. One of the practical results of the conflict of 1914-18 is a further stage in the evolution of fighting-ships and weapons with the idea of making them more deadly. The weight of a single shell from a 13.5-inch gun fired at Jutland was more than the weight of a broadside from the *Victory* at Trafalgar; the United States Navy has now 16-inch guns in vessels embodying

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the lessons of the former battle, and 20-inch guns are in contemplation. The *Dreadnought*, the wonder-ship of the world in 1906, was consigned to the scrap-heap in 1921. In the latter year one firm purchased no fewer than 113 obsolete vessels of the Navy, including five battleships and half a dozen cruisers. However useful conferences on disarmament may be, they can no more preclude war than Scotland Yard can exorcize crime.

While the Navy has still the simplicity of aim which has always characterized it, the means toward that end have become more and more complex with the passing of time. Ships of the viking type could fight singly or in numbers; to-day the maritime machine is a veritable House that Jack Built. First is the battleship, the heavy father of the Fleet. The battle-cruiser is its more athletic brother, capable of appearing on the scene of action quicker and putting up a stiff fight until the arrival of the battleship, as was the case at Jutland. Its gun-power is less and its carcass more vulnerable, the idea of its instigator being that "speed is armour." Armoured and protected cruisers are the policemen of the ocean highways. They perform all manner of useful jobs. In addition to superintending traffic—which implies the safety of floating commerce of their own country and the arresting of that of the enemy—they scout for information, support the light cruisers and destroyers which spy nearer the hostile coast, attack transports should opportunity serve, and form an excellent third

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line of defence. Destroyers are the cavalry of the seas, guarding the larger ships and delivering swift hussar-strokes with torpedoes and guns. As an antidote to the submarine, seeking whom it may devour, they are excellent. Other enemies of the latter are the various types of aircraft, with their inestimable advantage of being able to see below the surface to a considerable depth. The auxiliaries of the Fleet include mine-layers and mine-sweepers, coastal motor-boats and repair-ships, seaplane-carriers and tankers, store-ships and floating hospitals. It is a clear case of much wants more.

The "sea affair" of 1914-18 was an eye-opener in many ways. At Jutland the tactics of enemy destroyers rendered it necessary for the British Fleet to make alterations of course, involving loss of range and the escape of the Germans to their home ports. On the other hand, one battleship, the *Marlborough*, which remained in line, alone was hit by a torpedo. Only a dozen torpedoes in all were fired by British capital ships and battle-cruisers. The fight proved the superiority of gunfire over every other method of destruction. During the whole of the war only one British battleship, the *Audacious*, was sunk by a mine.

When hostilities ended in 1918 stocktaking began. Was the battleship to maintain its premier position, or had it been usurped by aircraft or the submarine? There was a battle royal in the newspapers and lengthy discussions in the clubs. Eminent authorities

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differed. It remained for the First Lord to clear the atmosphere. He attempted to do so in introducing the Navy Estimates in 1920, when he stated that in the opinion of the Naval Staff "the capital ship remains the unit on which sea-power is built up. So far from the late war having shown that the capital ship is doomed, it has, on the contrary, proved the necessity for the type. On the German side the whole of the submarine campaign against merchant vessels was built up on the power of the High Sea Fleet. On the British side the enemy submarines in no way interfered with the movements of capital ships in carrying out operations; destroyer screens, new methods of attack, and altered tactical movements defeated the submarine. . . . Nor at present could the Board of Admiralty subscribe to the statement that aircraft have doomed the capital ship. Aircraft are certainly of the highest importance in naval tactics, as regards reconnaissance, torpedo attacks, and artillery observation, but their rôle in present circumstances is that of an auxiliary and not of a substitute for the capital ship." At the same time Mr Walter (now Lord) Long added that "It is even possible that the present battleship will change to one of a semi-submersible type or even of a flying type, but such types are visions of the far future, not practical propositions of the moment."

Despite the opinion of the Naval Staff, in 1921 a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence was formed to go into the question. It was not a

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particularly polite way on the part of the Government of showing its faith in its own experts. Before the Great War Admiral Sir Percy Scott had emphasized the belief that the submarine dominated the battleship, and, after refusing to become a member of the new court of inquiry, summed up the situation from his own point of view by saying that he was quite sure that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty "will never get the battleships in again." The result of the conference was in favour of the existing capital ship.

In referring to this decision in the House of Commons, the Parliamentary Secretary of the Admiralty also remarked on aircraft, stating that they were much more dangerous to submarines than to battle-cruisers and smaller fry. He instanced the case of the *Goeben*, which was subjected to attack from the air for five days as she lay ashore after striking a mine. Although fifteen and a half tons of explosives were dropped, she was hit only once, the damage being light.

In commenting on this Sir Percy Scott pointed out that "The public are not reminded of the fact that this happened about five years ago, when we had no suitable bombs, and no torpedo-planes for attacking ships. The bombs used to attack the *Goeben* weighed about 40 lb. to 100 lb. Mr Holt Thomas tells us that to-day we would use bombs of one ton each; what will they be in three years when our battleships are built? It is the undeveloped future that we have

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to think about." In July 1921 fifteen aeroplanes of the United States Service attempted to drop fifty-two bombs on the former German Dreadnought the *Ostfriesland*. Thirteen bombs, weighing 600 lb. each, fell on the target without doing appreciable damage. Three direct hits with 1,000-lb. bombs sent her to the bottom. As the battleship was merely floating on a calm sea at the time, the test can scarcely be regarded as conclusive. A similar verdict must be given in the case of the raids made twelve months later on the wireless-controlled but defenceless *Agamemnon*, though the novel method of operating the obsolete battleship furnished a vista of amazing possibilities.

Important experiments have also been made with torpedo-carrying aircraft and in methods of attack by torpedoes governed by wireless from the land and the air. Had hostilities lasted another few weeks an aerial attack on the warships in the Kiel Canal would have been undertaken.

The submarine is still something of an unknown quantity in marine warfare. It played no important part in any action in the North Sea. In March 1920 M3, carrying a 12-inch gun housed in an armoured compartment forward of the conning-tower, successfully completed her steaming and diving tests. When it is recollected that the biggest gun on the earlier Dreadnoughts was of similar calibre, the advance made in this type of vessel may be appreciated. In 1914 a 14-pdr. was considered ample armament for surface work. Perhaps the ultimate solution will be

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a craft capable of floating on, under, and above the sea.

Of the large number of volumes consulted during the writing of the following pages, I am under special obligation to the standard works of Nicolas, Jane, Clowes, Hannay, Corbett, Colomb, Mahan, and Thurston, in addition to the publications of the Navy Records Society. Whenever possible I have used official dispatches or the words of eyewitnesses in preference to a second-hand version of events. I am particularly indebted to a number of officers and men who fought at sea in the Great War for valuable information detailed in the concluding chapters. The latter, considerably revised, are reprinted from two of my naval books now unobtainable.

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CHAPTER I

Our First War Fleet

The sea is the life-blood of the nation.

BEATTY

NEITHER legend nor fact suggests the name and condition of the world's first navigator. Looking out from the tangle of a primeval forest on a watercourse, or from the arid banks of the Tigris or the Euphrates, he probably saw a substantial branch drifting with the stream. Placing himself astride it with the idea of crossing to the other side, this Great Unknown made the pioneer essay in the intricacies of seamanship.

To hollow a log as a means of security and of comfort, to fix a stone beneath to give it stability, to shape it so as to offer less resistance to the element in which it floated, and to erect a sail of plaited rushes may have taken many centuries of evolution. In these mysteries of History we are perforce agnostic, though perhaps our surmise may not be far wrong if we suggest that a fish gave inspiration to the designer of the first boat. If knowledge of yesterday and to-day abides in the shades, the primitive shipbuilder has at least the satisfaction that in shape his conception has been little altered.

The hardy Norsemen set the fashion in craft for Northern Europe at a period so far back that Clio herself has forgotten. Even the Scandinavians, we

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are led to believe, had borrowed of the Phoenicians, as the latter had done of the Egyptians. The conservatism of perhaps centuries before the dawn of the Christian era remains imperturbable to-day. The viking ship, little altered, is still to be seen in the beautiful fjords of Norway. It may yet flaunt Democracy and run before the wind into "the red surges of a burning world."

To the Northmen the sea was mainly a highway for piracy and a route that enabled them to pillage on land, though the adventurers by no means despised a 'deal' when commerce was deemed more politic than murder. Tradition and reason suggest that the latter alternative was usually brought about by reason of greater strength on the part of the people in possession. It may have been the origin of Diplomacy. Norwegians and Danes harried the shores of Western Europe, England, Scotland, and Ireland to much good measure, setting up Scandinavian kingdoms in the Emerald Isle, the Hebrides, Man, and England. Their captives they sold as slaves to the barbarians of Russia, the gold and silver they kept for themselves, thereby showing a shrewd distinction in values. The Swedes confined their nefarious attentions mainly to the Baltic coast, winning the esteem of those outside that rugged littoral, and the entirely reasonable hatred of those within.

How these hardy and intrepid mariners faced the sea in their open boats, without chart or compass, voyaging to Iceland, the North Polar regions, and Greenland, and reaching America half a thousand years before Columbus, remains their secret. The narrow North Sea can be both ugly and angry on occasion, still more so the broad Atlantic. By the

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ninth century the vikings had visited Spain, raided Seville, and made descents on Northern Africa. Two hundred years later they had founded an empire in Southern Italy and Sicily. Notwithstanding their anything but peaceful penetration abroad, the Norsemen developed a wonderful civilization at home, though some of them worshipped Odin at Trondhjem with much good heart after having received Christian baptism elsewhere. They were artists in religion and decoration, and art is usually regarded as a refinement.

It has been argued with much plausibility by scientific men that the tonnage of Noah's ark was nearly 15,000, and that instead of being built in the shape of a Thames' barge with a row of cottages on it, the vessel was entirely worthy of a shipwright. However this may be, and accepting the traditional date of the Flood, the contemporary Egyptians were then using serviceable craft far removed from the dug-out. Probably the first maritime route was the Nile, navigated many a long year previous to the twenty-eighth century before Christ, the date of the earliest representation of a sea-going ship. As the vessel shows Phoenician prisoners, it is evident that voyages in the Eastern Mediterranean had already been made. When Pharaoh's ships were laden with cedar of Lebanon our own ancestors were living in the Stone Age in lake-dwellings.

Long before the Exodus the Egyptians had engaged in the Red Sea trade and indulged in expeditions to the mysterious land of Punt—usually identified with Somaliland. Precious woods, resin of incense, ebony, carved ivory set in gold, dog-eared apes, long-tailed monkeys, leopard-skins, and natives comprised their motley cargo on the return voyage. The ships of this

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period were rigged with a square sail, aided and abetted by thirty rowers. The primitive paddle had then gone out of fashion, and raised cabins fore and aft had been introduced.

Phoenicians were well aware of some safe landing in Cornwall, whence they secured tin, and it is extremely likely that they also had commercial intercourse with the south of Ireland. These merchant mariners of the ancient world are said to have circumnavigated Africa between 610 and 594 B.C., and discovered a route to India. For tin, lead, wool, and hides they bartered baubles, salt, and earthenware. Frankly, the bargain seems to have been on their side.

These Tradesmen of the Levant preceded the first visit of Caesar to Britain, in 55 B.C., before whose coming the Veneti of ancient Gaul had established excellent commercial relations with England. The maritime ambitions of the islanders developed late in the day. The Roman invader made no attempt at occupation, and it was not until the coming of Aulus Plautius in A.D. 43 that conquest was begun. During the governorship of Agricola (78-84) the rule of Rome was consolidated in England and Wales. The Romans remained in occupation for over three centuries, compelling the Britons to cease their too-frequent inter-tribal wars and to abandon Druidism.

The incursion of the Saxons into the piracy business toward the end of the third century led to the appointment of an official known as Count of the Saxon Shore, who was provided with land, soldiers, and ships. His jurisdiction extended from Norfolk to Sussex, and apparently on the opposite side of the Channel. The first holder of the title was Carausius, who seized the naval station of Gesoriacum, and announced himself

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as one of the emperors of Rome. His claim was eventually acknowledged by Maximian and Diocletian. Carausius remained in command of the sea, and therefore of Britain, until his assassination in 293. Note the importance of the maritime factor.

When the Emperor Honorius evacuated the province at the beginning of the fifth century the Picts and Scots invaded "from the North and North-west." Such is the information vouchsafed by Gildas, a Welsh monk and our sole contemporary authority. He adds that in response to an appeal the Romans sent a legion and drove the intruders back, that the same thing happened a second time, but after the final withdrawal of the soldiers the Picts from the north and the Irish rovers called Scots renewed their unwelcomed attentions. Help was sought from the Saxons—really the Jutes—but after it had been given the friends turned enemies. "Then," says the chronicler, "was kindled by the sacrilegious hands of the eastern folk a fire which blazed from sea to sea, and sank not till its red and cruel tongues were licking the western ocean." Within the period A.D. 450–520 Angles, Saxons, and Jutes were firmly established in Kent, the Isle of Wight, Essex, Middlesex, Sussex, Wessex, Suffolk, Norfolk, and on the north-eastern coast to the Firth of Forth. The original home of all these foreigners was the country we now call Denmark.

It was in 787 or thereabouts that, in the quaint language of an old annalist, "first came three ships of Norsemen from Haerethaland. . . . Those were the first ships of Danish men that sought the land of the English race." Apparently the writer was under the impression that there was no difference between Norsemen and Danes. There is little doubt,

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however, that the invaders were inhabitants of Norway who had settled at Hardeland, in Jutland. Recording their attack on Lindisfarne, off the Northumbrian coast, Simeon of Durham writes as follows :

“ In the same year [793], of a truth, the pagans from the northern region came with a naval armament to Britain, like stinging hornets, and overran the country in all directions, like fierce wolves, plundering, tearing, and killing not only sheep and oxen, but priests and Levites, and choirs of monks and nuns. They came, as we before said, to the church of Lindisfarne, and laid all waste with dreadful havoc, trod with unhallowed feet the holy places, dug up the altars, and carried off all the treasures of the holy church. Some of the brethren they killed ; some they carried off in chains ; many they cast out, naked and loaded with insults ; some they drowned in the sea. . . .

“ A.D. 794. The aforesaid pagans, ravaging the harbour of King Ecgfrid, plundered the monastery at the mouth of the river Don.¹ But St Cuthbert did not allow them to depart unpunished ; for their chief was there put to a cruel death by the Angles, and a short time afterward a violent storm shattered, destroyed, and broke up their vessels, and the sea swallowed up very many of them ; some, however, were cast ashore, and speedily slain without mercy : and these things befell them justly, since they heavily injured those who had not injured them.”

The first expedition of the Danes proper was in 834, when they ravaged Sussex. Their second visit was made a couple of years later, when they went further down the Channel and landed at Charmouth,

¹ Really the Wear.

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in Dorset. They met with a hostile reception, and although victors, made no attempt to secure a footing. In 838 another band of invaders was defeated at Hingston Down. Two years intervened, and they again attacked Dorset, Portland being the scene of their depredations, followed in 841 by bloodshed at Lindsey and on the East Anglian coast. Again and again they disturbed the inhabitants of various English towns, including London and Rochester. In 851, however, we read in the *Chronicle* that Aethelstan, King of Kent, "brought fourteen ships and slew a great force at Sandwich in Kent, and took nine ships and put the others to flight." This information is interesting because it introduces sea-power in defence, although in an extremely small way. Unfortunately Aethelstan's victory does not appear to have been decisive, for we are told that "the heathen men for the first time took up their quarters over winter in Thanet. And in the same year came three hundred and fifty ships to the north of the Thames, and landed and took Canterbury and London by storm, and put to flight Beorhtwulf, King of the Mercians, with his army, and then went south over the Thames into Surrey, and there King Aethelwulf and his son Aethelbald, with the army of the West Saxons, fought against them at Aclea, and there made the greatest slaughter among the heathen army that we have heard tell of until this present day, and there gained the victory."

These predatory expeditions continued on and off until 866, when Aethelred I was King of Wessex. That year witnessed an invasion of East Anglia by the Danes, who wintered there and afterward marched on Northumbria, seizing York. Mercia was the next

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scene of their operations, followed by a further attack on Northumbria, East Anglia, and Essex. After contesting Wessex at Reading, the Danes were worsted at Ashdown by Aethelred and his brother Alfred. Two further battles ensued, in both of which the foreigners were victorious, despite severe losses. The last-mentioned conflicts took place in 871, the year in which Alfred, who is usually regarded as the founder of the British Navy, became king.

His reign did not open auspiciously, for he was again defeated at Wilton, in Wiltshire. From the fact that they were willing to withdraw from Wessex on payment by Alfred of a subsidy, one must surmise that although the Danes had secured a series of victories they had also paid dearly in dead and wounded. They sought easier prey in Mercia, where they set up a *thegn* of their own, and also consolidated their conquests in Northumbria. This gave Alfred an opportunity to build a number of vessels for fighting purposes, for he discerned that maritime power alone enabled the Danes and other invaders to attack and secure a foothold in England, and that attack at sea was the only way of resisting the designs of future hordes. Whatever former kings may have had of the nature of a fleet, the foregoing record shows it to have been virtually useless. Alfred doubtless copied the Danes in the matter of shipbuilding; indeed, he seems to have improved on their models in certain particulars. According to chroniclers, some of them had forty oars and upward, and probably a single sail. The King's ships were divided into three squadrons, kept on the east, west, and north coasts respectively, which was admirable strategy.

By 875 Alfred had made excellent progress with

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his fleet, for we are told in the *Old English Chronicle* that "in the summer, King Aelfred went out to sea with a naval force, and fought against the crews of seven ships, and took one of them, and put to flight the others."

The peace which the King had bought in 871 was broken five years later, but sea-power was still with the Danes. With the assistance of Scandinavian settlers or rovers from Ireland, they established themselves at Wareham, on the Dorsetshire coast. From thence some of them escaped to Exeter, and had it not been that many of their ships were wrecked by a storm reinforcements would have reached the Devonshire contingent. They were forced to capitulate, and agreed to evacuate entirely Alfred's kingdom. "The naval force," says the historian, "sailed west about; and then a great storm met them at sea, and there perished a hundred and twenty ships at Swanwick. And King Aelfred, with his force, rode after the mounted army as far as Exeter, but could not overtake them before they were in the fastness, where they could not be come at. And they there gave him as many hostages as he would have, and swore great oaths, and then held good peace."

In 878, "after Twelfth Night," hostilities recommenced, the Danes taking up a position at Chippenham and fortifying it, while their allies at sea harried Devonshire with twenty-three ships. Some of the English, dispirited by seemingly never-ending warfare, deserted to the enemy. Alfred, "with a little band, withdrew to the woods and moor-fastnesses" of the Isle of Athelney, in Somersetshire. Here he is supposed to have been roundly scolded by the neatherd's wife for allowing her cakes to burn. In response

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to Alfred's message, "Let every man who is not worthless come!" he gathered sufficient forces to attack the Danes at Edington (a place which has not been identified with certainty) and completely defeated them. In the subsequent treaty of Wedmore it was agreed that Alfred should hold the southern half of Mercia, Wessex, and Kent, while his former enemies should retain possession of Northumbria, East Anglia, and the northern half of Mercia.

Little is known of the vessels of the Anglo-Saxon period. So far as we can ascertain they were similar to the viking ships, with bows and sterns upturned and ornamented, without a deck, having a solitary mast with a square sail, an ample supply of oars, and steered by a paddle fixed to the quarter. Probably sixty men at most would constitute the crew. Alfred introduced a type known as *æscs*, which are described in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as "full-nigh twice as long as the others; some had sixty oars, and some had more; they were both swifter and steadier, and also higher than the others. They were shapen neither like the Frisian nor the Danish; but so as it seemed to himself that they might be most useful."

As these long-ships were specially built for dealing with his sea enemies, we may take it that they constituted the first English war fleet. Appropriately enough, after delivering himself of the above description, the ancient historian just quoted proceeds to give a sample of their fighting qualities.

"Then on a certain time," he writes, "in the same year [897] there came six ships to Wight, and did there much evil, both in Devon and elsewhere on the seashore. Then the King commanded [his men] to go thither with nine of the new ships and they blockaded

Our First War Fleet

against them the mouth into the outer sea. They then went with three ships out against them, and three lay high up in the mouth, in the dry: the men were gone off on shore. They then took two of the three ships at the outward mouth, and slew the men, and the one escaped, in which also the men were killed, save five, who came away because the ships of the others were aground. They were also aground very inconveniently; three were aground on the side of the deep on which the Danish ships were aground, and all the others on the other side, so that not one of them could get to the others. But when the water had ebbed many furlongs from the ships, then the Danish went from the three ships to the other three which had been left by the ebb on their side, and they then fought there. There were slain Lucumon the king's reeve, and Wulfhard the Frisian, and Aebbe the Frisian, and Aethelhere the Frisian, and Aethelferth the king's companion, and of all the men, Frisian and English, sixty-two, and of the Danish a hundred and twenty. But then the flood came to the Danish ships before the Christians could shove theirs out; and they therefore rowed away out; they were then so damaged that they could not row round the South Saxons' land, for there the sea cast two of them on land, and the men were led to the king at Winchester, and he commanded them to be there hanged; and the men who were in the one ship came to East Anglia sorely wounded. In the same summer no less than twenty ships, with men and everything, perished on the south coast."

CHAPTER II

The Coming of Duke William

Small measures produce only small results.

NELSON

ALTFRED'S notion that the proper way to use a fleet was to take the offensive, to attack the enemy before he reached the shore, and to patrol the coast, for which purpose it is said he eventually succeeded in maintaining no fewer than 300 vessels, was followed by Edward the Elder, Athelstan, and Edgar. The second became first king of all England and the first English monarch to enter into alliance with a foreign sovereign for warlike purposes. William of Malmesbury is authority for the information that Athelstan was presented by Harold, King of Norway, with a ship worthy of so keen a warrior. It had a purple sail and a prow of gold, while shields of the same precious metal formed the bulwarks.

During the reign of Ethelred the Unready the Danes again played havoc, and although defeated in an attack on London, they subsequently committed terrible destruction in West Kent, Devon, Somerset, Hampshire, Wiltshire, and East Anglia. Three times Ethelred 'bought off' his enemies, and finally he made a determined effort to put his navy on a firm footing. For this purpose he levied the first tax ever raised for the senior service, and when the boats were ready stationed them at Sandwich. The crews of a score of

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ships were worked upon by Wulfnoth, father of Earl Godwin, and threw in their lot with him and boldly made off. Although eighty vessels were sent in chase the weather favoured the enterprising traitor, for a gale sprang up and dispersed the pursuers, driving many ashore. Wulfnoth was evidently a more skilful seaman than the commander of the King's squadron, for he destroyed all the craft that did not sink. Ethelred, unwilling to take further risks, returned to London, to which place what remained of the shattered navy was also taken. It is not surprising that the Danes recommenced their plundering and burnings in East Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, and Berkshire.

Swain, who had taken part in some of these predatory expeditions, landed with his son Canute at Sandwich in 1013. There is no need to follow his wanderings in detail. The essential fact is that they ended with his becoming king. On Swain's death Canute was elected his successor by the fleet. In 1028, "with fifty ships of English thegns," aided by a Danish fleet which brought up the number of his available vessels to 1,440, he sailed to Norway and conquered the country.

Nothing further of striking importance happened on the sea until the early years of Edward the Confessor's reign. In 1044, owing to information that Magnus, King of Norway, entertained the idea of the invasion of England, he concentrated a powerful fleet at Sandwich. Nothing came of the threat, however, although two or three years later a successful raid was made on the port.

Probably the most popular fact of English history is the chronological "William the Conqueror, 1066-1087" of childhood. The tremendous significance of the first date is usually lost. The Duke of Normandy

The Story of the British Navy

had a large army that of itself was quite valueless for other than Continental warfare. Backed by a powerful fleet the land-force had far-reaching potentialities. Harold knew that immense preparations were being made in all the ports of Normandy, and like a wise king prepared to resist the coming of his rival. Sandwich again resounded to the tramp of troops and the plash of oars, and for a time the King made the place his headquarters. Whether he got tired of waiting, as has been suggested, or allowed the crews to return home on account of lack of provisions, is not a matter of exact record. When historians disagree Truth is shamed. Harold, says the compiler of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, "then gathered so great a naval force, and also a land-force, as no king here in the land had before gathered; because it had for truth been said to him, that Count William of Normandy, King Eadward's kinsman, would come hither and subdue the land, all as it afterwards came to pass. . . . Then came King Harold to Sandwich, and there awaited his fleet, because it was long before it could be gathered. And when his fleet was gathered, he went to Wight, and there lay all the summer and the autumn; and a land-force was kept everywhere by the sea, though at the end it availed nought. When it was the Nativity of St Mary [September 8th] the men's provisions were gone, and no man could longer keep him there. The men were then allowed to go home and the King rode up, and the ships were driven to London, and many perished before they came hither."

The vessels were ordered to London, where they were least wanted. Many were lost on the way. Thus a fine armament disappeared, and when William was ready Harold was not. Another Harold—Harold

The Coming of Duke William

Hardrada of Norway—assisted by the treachery of the English King's unscrupulous brother Tostig, had invaded the North, attacked Scarborough, sailed up the Humber and the Ouse, and secured York. In the battle that ensued at Stamford Bridge Harold Godwineson was victorious. "But," as Thierry says, "while these enemies were departing, never to return, other enemies were approaching; and the same breath of wind that waved the victorious Saxon banners as in triumph also filled the Norman sails, and wafted them toward the coast of Sussex."

Bull, banner, and ring arrived from the Pope for Duke William. The first excommunicated Harold; the second was blessed to bring good luck to the expedition and to make of it something of the nature of a crusade; the third was sent as evidence of personal regard. At a great meeting held to consider the project, to which most, if not all, of the bigwigs of Normandy were invited, there were those who even in those days were not afraid to speak their minds and to question the advisability of the undertaking. "We are not bound to pay him an aid for any expedition beyond the sea," they objected. "He has burdened us too much already by his wars: if he fail in his new expedition our country is ruined." Others said that an "adventure beyond the ability of a Roman emperor could but result in the destruction of their own beautiful Normandy."

The dissentients were in the majority, but William interviewed them personally, with the almost inevitable result that they surrendered to his views, and money poured into the ducal coffers and kind into the ducal storehouses.

Then came much drum-beating for the army. Rich booty was promised, a bishopric in England was

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mortgaged for a vessel and twenty men-at-arms; land, castles, and wives were freely distributed. The scum of humanity drifted to the ports of Normandy, where shipwrights, armourers, and smiths plied their trades to the undoing of Albion. You can see them hard at it in the Bayeux Tapestry. They, with adventurers and honest men, were enlisted at good pay. Others entered the ranks to save their souls by fighting beneath the papal banner.

With his friends and relations Duke William fared less well. Other men have had similar experience. Like the guests invited to the great supper, "they all with one consent began to make excuse." King Philip, assisted in his decision by his councillors, argued that as William had never showed him particular respect as Duke of Normandy he was scarcely likely to mend his manners as King of England; on the other hand there was the likelihood that if he failed the victorious nation would almost certainly become enemies of France. He therefore preferred to have nothing to do with the matter. William's brother-in-law, the Count of Flanders, followed suit. A few princelings and knights threw in their lot with him.

As the place of concentration for his fleet the Duke fixed on the mouth of the river Dive, between the Seine and the Orne. When the ships were all shepherded they were sent to Saint-Valery, near Dieppe. In the storm and rain that set in both soldiers and sailors saw a portent of disaster. Some of the vessels foundered with their crews. Dead men tell no tales, but corpses are not conducive to optimism. The irreligious argued that though the Pope had sent a banner God had sent a contrary wind, and the latter was the more practical of the two. The spiritually-minded thought only of the

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wrath of the Almighty and regarded the bad weather as a specific warning not to interfere with one's neighbours. A certain man coveted Naboth's vineyard, and no good came of it. Wet without, the Duke gave them wet within. He plied soldiers and sailors with liquor, then went to church to pray for a change of wind. His *Pater nosters* and *Ave Marias* remained unanswered. The bones of St Valery, which ought to have made their last journey long before, were carted round the camp, and much precious metal found its way to the shrine from whence the relics had been removed. Good Catholics and bad were appeased on the following day. The weather cleared, and when the sun set in the crimson west the Duke and his followers were at sea.

One alleged authority says the fleet was made up of 3,000 sailing-ships, another reduces the number to 400 large vessels and over 1,000 transports, a third gives 1,000, a fourth 696. It was evidently a considerable armament, for the men are supposed to have totalled 60,000.

William's ship, the *Mora*—presented to him by his wife Matilda, it is said—led the van. One can assume from this that the picture of it on the Bayeux Tapestry was probably worked by that fair lady's hand, it being more or less generally agreed that she and her ladies were responsible for that wonderful historical record. The single mast, supporting a solitary striped sail, had at its head a cross of gold, and a white banner bordered in blue surrounding another gold cross, doubtless the gift of Pope Alexander II. At the prow was the carving of a lion's head, and at the stern that of a boy blowing a horn and bearing a flag. Thirteen shields lined the gunwale. In the needlework ships

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carrying from three to eight horses apiece are also represented.

The *Mora*, being a fast sailer and probably better handled, drew ahead of the fleet. "I see nothing but sea and sky," shouted a man who was sent to the masthead on the following morning, whereupon the Duke at once ordered the ship to anchor and food and drink to be served. Later the look-out saw four vessels coming toward them, and finally reported "a forest of masts and sails."

William appears to have made a precipitate landing at Pevensey by stumbling against a pebble or rock as he jumped overboard, and getting a ducking. "By God's splendour," he cried, not without a touch of dramatic wit, "I have seized England with my two hands," while a soldier is alleged to have given him a tuft of thatch from a hovel on the beach with the remark, "Sire, receive the seizin; the country is yours."

There was no resistance to the new-comer. He literally "burnt his boats behind him." There was to be no turning back. Likewise for several years there was to be no navy, for what remained of Harold's ships had for the most part been taken to Ireland by his sons Godwin and Edmund.

CHAPTER III

At Sea with the Crusaders

The first article of an Englishman's creed must be that he believeth in the sea.

MARQUESS OF HALIFAX, 1649

AFTER having been treated to the indignity to which he had subjected England, though those who came in ships and plundered the West Country were not so successful, and the Danes who ravished the North were content to be bought off, William I decided that the arm which had stood him in such stead sadly needed resurrection. To what extent he built ships we are unaware. All we know is that he invaded Scotland by land and sea, crossed the Channel, subdued Maine, failed in Brittany, and brought back from the Continent a large army. Moreover he levied danegeld for the purpose of placing himself in a position to resist the threatened invasion of the kings of Denmark and of Norway and the Count of Flanders. Huge preparations were made by the enemy, but, for whatever reason, they failed to mature.

Hastings, Sandwich, Dover, Romney, and Hythe, to which were afterward added Winchelsea and Rye, may well be regarded as the cradles of the Navy. Some of them had already furnished men and ships to Alfred and Edward the Confessor. The first five were definitely established as the Cinque Ports in 1078, and in return for providing William with ships were granted certain privileges. For fifteen days in any

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one year they were bound to supply 1,197 men and boys and fifty-seven ships at the expense of the towns. If they were retained for a longer period the cost fell on the king.

William's immediate successor does not appear to have taken special interest in the fleet, though it is on record that on one occasion, despite bad weather and contrary wind, he insisted on putting to sea at once. "I never heard of a king that was shipwrecked," he told the sailors; "weigh anchor, and you will see that the winds will be with us."

From a naval point of view Henry I began his reign inauspiciously. Again invasion threatened, but instead of awaiting the coming of the enemy—in this case his brother Robert, Duke of Normandy—the King pursued the proper course by ordering his fleet out to intercept the oncoming squadrons. Evidently their sense of loyalty to the new monarch was not markedly developed, for many of the masters of vessels threw in their lot with Robert, who landed at Portsmouth and not at Pevensey, as had been anticipated. Although Henry took no personal part in the attempt to rescue the Holy Land from the hands of the infidels, Hardinge of England arrived at Joppa with some 200 ships when Jerusalem was besieged in 1107.

Thirteen years later there occurred one of the most memorable of naval tragedies. Of all the stories in English history beloved by schoolboys and retained in after-life, that of the *White Ship* is assuredly one of the outstanding favourites. According to Orderic Vital, a contemporary, Thomas FitzStephen, as the son of the man "who conveyed your father to England in his own ship, when he crossed the sea to make war on Harold," approached Henry for the honour of

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furnishing him passage. This would lead one to infer that the vessel used by William of Normandy was not presented by Matilda, but the matter is not of importance. Probably the elder seaman was the pilot, and nothing more. Saying that he had already chosen his vessel, Henry told Thomas that he could embark Prince William on the *Blanche Nef*. In a spirit of comradeship the young heir ordered wine to be given out. Unfortunately for him, the crew failed to err on the side of moderation. Late in getting under way, Vital tells us, "in his drunken folly, Thomas, confident of his seamanship and the skill of his crew, rashly boasted that he would soon leave behind him all the ships that had started before them. At last he gave the signal for departure; the sailors seized the oars without a moment's delay, and, unconscious of the fate which was imminently impending, joyously handled the ropes and sails, and made the ship rush through the water at a great rate. But as the drunken rowers exerted themselves to the utmost in pulling the oars, and the luckless pilot steered at random and got the ship out of its due course, the starboard bow of the *Blanche Nef* struck violently on a huge rock, which is left dry, every day, when the tide is out, and is covered by the waves at high water. Two planks having been shattered out by the crash, the ship, alas! filled and went down. At this fearful moment, the passengers and crew raised cries of distress, but their mouths were soon stopped by the swelling waves, and all perished together, except two who seized hold of the yard from which the sail was set. . . .

"Thomas, the master of this vessel, after his first plunge into the sea, gained fresh energy, and, recovering his senses, raised his head above water, and

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perceiving the two men clinging to the yard-arm, cried out: 'What has become of the King's son?' The shipwrecked men replied that he and all who were with him had perished. 'Then,' said he, 'it is misery for me to live any longer.' Having said this, he abandoned himself to his fate in utter despair, preferring to meet it at once, rather than to face the rage of the King in his indignation for the loss of his children, or drag out his existence and expiate his crime in a dungeon."

Stephen, while he invaded Normandy, was far too busy with civil war for the greater part of his reign to give much attention to the Navy. It is to the credit of Henry II that he precluded the buying or selling of English ships to foreigners, and seamen were not to be induced to leave the country. With a fleet of 400 vessels he crossed to Ireland and conquered it.

What the passionate and persistent Henry had contemplated doing in the matter of the Crusades was reserved for Richard the Lion-hearted, who gave immense impetus to the maritime power of England. He not only made numerous rules and regulations for the sea-service, but issued our earliest Articles of War. The penalty for theft on the part of a sailor was tarring and feathering, and being placed on shore in that condition at the earliest opportunity. For striking a man without wounding him so that blood flowed the sentence was ducking thrice. The appearance of gore cost the assailant a hand. Murder was punished by the criminal being flung overboard bound to the corpse. The stringency of these sentences is sufficient to show that the mariners of the twelfth century were rather an unruly class and given to quarrels among themselves when enemies were not available.

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The galley was still the standard pattern of warship, while busses with bulging sides like a wine-cask, and probably a single mast, were used for the transport of troops, munitions, and stores. Horses were conveyed in flat-bottomed ships called vissera. Lightly built snakes and small barges complete the list of types.

To folk who have lived in the era of the *Dreadnought*, the *Hood*, and the submarine mounting a 12-inch gun Richard's craft are almost whimsically primitive. Yet we must not boast too much of our vaunted modernity. The flame-throwers and liquid fire, the artificial smoke-clouds and poisonous gas of the Great War were in use during the Crusades by Christian and infidel alike. These refinements of cruelty were less perfect in 1195 than in 1918, but they were equally feared and possibly even more effective.

Liquid fire was the invention of Callinicus, of Helio-polis, about the seventh century. When the secret of its composition leaked out it was referred to as Greek fire. Its exact ingredients are unknown to-day, but it is believed that pitch, sulphur, and naphtha were included. Poured through a tube like water through a garden-hose, it ignited on exposure to the air, and nothing could extinguish it but vinegar or sand. The flame made a deep roar, dense smoke, and an appalling stink. Rags or tow soaked in the mixture were affixed to arrows. When, in the middle of the thirteenth century, Louis IX undertook an expedition to Egypt, the natives treated the army to a dose of this medicine with great effect. "The fire which they cast was as large as a tun," we are told, "with a long burning tail; its noise in the air was like thunder, and it seemed a flying dragon. The light it gave was so great, that I could see throughout the camp as

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clearly as in open day. It consumed any inflammable body on which it fell, without a possibility of its being extinguished." Fireworks made of the same stuff were called serpents.

From a maritime point of view the Crusades are particularly interesting, because so far as is known no English ship had hitherto penetrated the Mediterranean. It is not surprising that in this pioneer effort some of them came to grief. The King and a number of his followers sailed from Dover in December 1189, and, landing at Calais, proceeded to Marseilles by the overland route. The fleet concentrated at Dartmouth under the command of Gerard, Archbishop of Aix, Bernard, Bishop of Bayonne, Robert de Sabloil, Richard de Camville, who was an English baron, and William de Fortz of Oleron, and sailed at the end of the following April. Even allowing for calls and waiting for stragglers, the voyage to Marseilles took a long time, for it was not until August 22nd that 106 large ships put in at that port. Richard, tired of waiting, had gone on in a chartered galley called the *Pumbo*, and meeting the fleet at Scylla, proceeded to Messina. Here many galleys were found to be sadly in need of repair, and an additional force of thirty busses arrived from England.

The *Itinerarium*, usually attributed to Geoffrey of Vinsauf, but probably the work of Richard, Canon and Prior of Holy Trinity, London, gives a vivid word-picture of the scene.

"As soon as the people heard of his arrival," it notes, "they rushed in crowds to the shore to behold the glorious King of England, and at a distance saw the sea covered with innumerable galleys, and the sound of trumpets from afar, with the sharper and shriller blasts of clarions, resounded in their ears; and they

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beheld the galleys rowing in order nearer to the land, adorned and furnished with all manner of arms, countless pennons floating in the wind, ensigns at the ends of the lances, the beaks of the galleys distinguished by various paintings, and glittering shields suspended to the prows. . . .”

When the fleet left Messina in April 1191 its strength had reached over 200 vessels of various kinds, several of which foundered in a storm a few days later. The ship conveying the King's sister Joanna and the beautiful Berengaria of Navarre, to whom Richard was betrothed, got separated from the others. On nearing Cyprus the commander determined to call to make inquiries. On the ladies being asked to land, he noticed that armed galleys were being made ready, and suspecting treachery, again put to sea. When Richard was informed of these proceedings, and in addition was told that the survivors of three of his ships which had been wrecked had been scurvily treated by Isaac, the ruler of the island, he was exceeding wrath. With some 3,000 men in galleys and snakes he landed at Lymesol and captured the place. As part of the price of peace Isaac agreed to serve under Richard in the Holy War with 500 knights and to pay 20,000 gold marks. Isaac broke the compact and, escaping from prison, sought refuge in the interior. The fleet was immediately ordered to patrol the island and capture every vessel sighted while the army searched. Isaac surrendered, and Cyprus became England's most distant possession.

Continuing its voyage eastward, the fleet had its first sea-fight. So great was the enemy vessel that Richard of Devizes refers to it as “a ship than which, except Noah's ship, none greater was ever read of!”

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She was apparently a very large buss with three masts, and among other weapons of destruction had a plentiful supply of Greek fire. After promising his men that if they captured her the booty on board should be theirs, Richard attacked the vessel with much determination, but owing to the height of her sides and the advantage her crew possessed in being able to hurl missiles down instead of up, the English seamen, finding they could make no headway, began to slacken. "Know that if this ship escape," Richard cried, "every one of you shall be hung on the cross or put to extreme torture." At length some succeeded in clambering up her sides and boarding her, only to be hurled back when it seemed that she was on the point of surrendering. As a last resort Richard ordered his galleys to ram. The iron spurs fixed to the bows won the day. Plank after plank was stove in, and "it sanke son in the se." The contemporary statement that she had 1,500 Turks on board cannot be other than a gross exaggeration, though it is possible that she may have had several hundred. All with the exception of fifty-five were killed, drowned, or massacred.

Following the lines of Admiral Mahan, a fascinating book might be written on the influence of religion on commerce. The idea may seem to strike a jarring note, but the two have been curiously intermixed at various times. The Crusades gave a mighty impetus to English shipbuilding, with the inevitable corollary of an expansion of trade. Many of the Mediterranean warships were provided with castles at bow and stern, in addition to a fighting-top. A predecessor of Captain Cuttle made a note of these features, which were subsequently introduced into English vessels. During this period there was virtually no distinction between

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the Mercantile Marine and the Navy proper. Each fought in war and traded in peace. The armed auxiliaries of 1914-18 were merely reversions to type.

Note the track of Richard. An eastward-bound P. & O. liner is following it as you read, penetrating the Straits, skirting the Balearic Islands, putting in at Marseilles, thence passing between Corsica and Sardinia, and through the Straits of Messina that wash the toe of Italy. The steamer will go direct to Alexandria or Port Said. The Crusaders of yesteryear steered a more northerly course, skirting the Grecian side of Crete, and from thence to Rhodes and Acre.

The great commercial expansion that followed the Crusades is told in a series of purple patches by Matthew of Westminster. "The Pisans, Genoese, and Venetians," he tells us, "supply England with the Eastern gems, as sapphires, emeralds, and carbuncles; from Asia was brought the rich silks and purples; from Africa the cinnamon and balm; from Spain the kingdom was enriched with gold; with silver from Germany; from Flanders came the rich materials for the garments of the people; while plentiful streams of wine flowed from their own province of Gascoigny; joined with everything that was rich and pretious from every land, wide stretching from the Hyades to the Arcturian Star."

Venice, however, was then the paramount sea-Power of the world. Her citizens profited mightily by Crusades and pilgrimages, exacting their pound of flesh, starting trading-stations in the East, exporting the religious, and importing Eastern products. Carrack and caravel dominated the Adriatic, colonies came into being in Crete, Cyprus, the Morea, and the Ægean islands. The Latin Empire of Constantinople was founded with their help.

CHAPTER IV

A Good Word for King John

It's half the battle gained to take the offensive.

FISHER

JOHN is perhaps the king for whom the average reader entertains the least respect. His character is summed up by a great modern historian as "tyrannical, treacherous, petulant, passionate, infamous in all his private relations, careless of all his public duties." Yet it was during his reign that England had her first really important victory at sea, and he certainly increased the fleet.

In 1213 Philip Augustus of France was making mighty preparations for the invasion of England. Every acre of land in France that the Plantagenets had formerly held had been torn from John, and as the Pope had excommunicated him it was not surprising that Philip believed the majority of the English king's subjects would welcome relief from the hard taskmaster who ruled them.

The situation was saved by the energy of William of the Long Sword, Earl of Salisbury. Appreciating that the coast of the enemy was the frontier of England, and that the one who gets his blow in first has done much to secure ultimate victory, he determined to surprise Philip's flotilla before it sailed. He held no brief for the theory of stopping at home to resist attack, but was all for the offensive. What if

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the enemy did have three times the number of ships ? To him it mattered little provided he could slip across the North Sea without being observed.

Philip's fleet is said to have consisted of 1,700 vessels, which is probably an exaggeration, while those at the disposal of the English commander numbered some 500. The former were mostly anchored in the roadstead of Damme, the seaport of Bruges, while others were in the harbour, distributed along the coast, or pulled up on the beach.

Many of the sailors were on shore, which is sufficient to prove that the Earl had not been sighted while at sea and the news of his approach conveyed to Philip's commander. Those who were on board put up a good fight, but it did not prevent William from capturing 300 vessels. Craft on shore were rifled of their contents and set on fire. Proceeding to the harbour, William led his men to attack the remaining ships. So great was the onslaught that the French abandoned hope, and jumping into the water, swam for safety out of the reach of the English archers.

"Those Frenchmen that were gone into the country," Holinshed tells us, "perceiving that their enemies were come by the running away of the mariners, returned with all speed to their ships to aid their fellows, and so make valiant resistance for a time, till the Englishmen, getting on land and ranging themselves on either side of the haven, beat the Frenchmen on both sides ; and the ships being grappled together in front, they fought on the decks as it had been in a pitched field, till that finally the Frenchmen were not able to sustain the force of the Englishmen, but were constrained, after long fighting and great slaughter, to yield themselves prisoners."

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Damme was set on fire, but an attack on Bruges, which was made to secure further ships, was not successful, and the naval victors were forced to retire to their fleet, leaving 2,000 of their comrades dead. The projected invasion never took place. Indeed, Philip felt such keen humiliation that in a burst of foolish anger he ordered what vessels remained to be set on fire.

An interesting seal in the British Museum is that of the old Flemish seaport which gave its name to the battle. It is dated only four years before, and represents one of the types of ship that must have fought against the English in 1213. It is a single-masted vessel with a castle in fore and stern, from each of which a warrior is supporting a huge standard. She has a schooner bow and a raking bowsprit, while the rudder occupies a position similar to that of modern ships. The vessel of Damme is a signal departure from the viking ship. A century was to pass before the latter adopted the new method of steering.

Although John signed Magna Carta in 1215, he speedily showed that he had not the remotest intention of carrying out its tenets. Many of the barons thereupon negotiated with Prince Louis of France, Philip's eldest son, and again active preparations were made for invasion. Louis chose as his commander Eustace the Monk, who had forsaken cloistered ease for the more exciting life of a pirate, and after having served John for some little while had turned traitor and attacked Sandwich, Ryde, and Hastings, among other places. He was a formidable antagonist, but opposed to him was Hubert de Burgh, a warrior who proved worthy of his steel.

Sending a small fleet and a first detachment of his

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army to London in February 1216, Louis started from Calais with some 680 vessels. The stalwarts of the Cinque Ports were ready to meet them, and would doubtless have fought with their accustomed tenacity had not a storm scattered the French fleet. Even then they managed to cut off and capture some of the vessels. When the gale was over Louis's ships re-formed and landed the soldiers at Sandwich.

John had marched with his army to Dover, but when he was aware of the landing of the French he retreated as rapidly as possible to Bristol. Rochester Castle was besieged and captured by Louis; London received him with enthusiasm. So far so good, but Dover, the key of England, was in Hubert de Burgh's keeping, and until it was wrested from him the Prince's lines of communication were anything but safe.

Despite the use of a formidable engine of war known as a *malvoisin*—literally 'bad neighbour'—Louis could make no impression on the fortress. He lost so many men in the attempt that after a few weeks he came to the conclusion that the only means of reducing the garrison was by famine. The barons who had thrown off their allegiance to John joined him, but "all the King's horses and all the King's men" could not shake Hubert. Louis was equally stubborn, but failed to recognize that he was wasting precious time. Not only did he forfeit the goodwill of some of the barons and many of the people, but John established his headquarters at Lincoln and secured the valuable support of the seamen. In addition, the Prince proved in many ways that the substitution of Louis for John would mean the perpetuation of tyranny. Thanks to his own foolish policy, the stubbornness of Hubert de Burgh, and the

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frequent capture of supplies by the men who held the sea, the French prince made but sorry progress.

Louis returned to France to recruit his depleted forces, but John's unexpected death and the liberal measures promulgated by the Earl of Pembroke, who became guardian of the kingdom and foster-father of the boy-king Henry III, undermined the allegiance of some at least of the renegade barons. At Lincoln the French were totally defeated, and Louis retreated from Dover to London, the stronghold of his party.

Once more Eustace the Monk crosses the stage of History. Eighty large vessels and many smaller ships were placed under his command to convey succour to Louis. It was Hubert's opportunity also.

The latter appealed to the Bishop of Winchester and his knights for help. "We are not soldiers of the sea," was the reply, "nor maritime adventurers, nor fishermen; but do thou go to thy death." The gallant men of the Cinque Ports made an answer worthy of them: "Let us take our souls in our hands and meet him while he is at sea, and help will come to us from on high." The loyal garrison of Dover Castle swore that they would never surrender, and Hubert stepped with a light heart into the ship awaiting him. He would attack the enemy before they reached the coast.

Hubert de Burgh showed by his manœuvres that he was a tactician of no mean order. When Eustace saw the English ships standing over to Calais he waxed merry at the thought of the warm reception that would be accorded them. Hubert was merely sailing in that direction to secure the windward position that would enable him to attack when he wished. Turning together, the English fleet bounded forward, in line abreast

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like a squadron of cavalry charging, and boldly attacked the French rear. Clothyard shafts and bolts from crossbows found their billets among the crowded soldiers and seamen. Then they came closer, finally closed, and the men of the Cinque Ports, throwing quicklime at the moment of boarding, were at death-grips with Louis's reinforcements. Axes and swords were not used sparingly in the *mêlée* that followed. Some of the mariners, armed with scythes on poles, hacked at the rigging. No quarter was given, though it was asked. In those times an enemy's life was sometimes spared by payment of a heavy ransom; not so on this day of days in 1217.

"If these people land, England is lost; let us therefore boldly meet them, for God is with us, and they are excommunicate." Thus Hubert de Burgh, Justiciary and Governor, before the expedition had left, and his words were not forgotten. Eustace the Monk was discovered, and offered a fortune to his captor. He spoke to the wrong man, for he who confronted him was an illegitimate son of King John. If the latter had no great reverence for his father's memory, he had certainly no use for so treacherous a foe. "Base traitor!" he cried. "Never again will you seduce men by your false promises!" He raised his sword, and when it descended it dripped with blood as the headless trunk of the erstwhile monk rolled over.

Throughout the remaining pages of this volume you will read of admirals manœuvring to secure the weather-gauge—a goodly company who owed much to the mastermind of Hubert de Burgh, fighter on land and sea.

Within a month of the battle of Dover peace was signed, and Louis and his soldiers left the land they had sought to conquer.

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Throughout Henry's long reign the Navy was kept mighty busy. Time after time orders were given to the stalwarts of the Cinque Ports to make ready or to sail. On one occasion the largest army ever raised in England up to that time was gathered in and about Portsmouth, only to find that means of transport was woefully deficient. Hubert de Burgh, then Earl of Kent, was held responsible for this lamentable lack of accommodation; the King called him an old traitor to his face. Evidently a bold and successful attempt to make up for lost time was made, for when the expedition sailed nearly 200 ships were left behind because they were not wanted. This strength was not maintained. Thirteen years later the Archbishop of York felt compelled to advise the King to leave the Continent and return to England. The bold measures taken by the French and the depredations of pirates roaming the Channel actually wrung from the barons of the Cinque Ports the humiliating confession that the French were the stronger. Hastings, Winchelsea, Rye, Romney, Hythe, Dover, Sandwich, and neighbouring villages "which pertaineth" were called upon to provide fifty-seven ships, 1,140 men, and fifty-seven boys. During the civil war of 1263-4 the hardy mariners of these ports ran amok by capturing every vessel they could, whether English or foreign, murdering crews and passengers, and helping themselves to whatever cargo was to be found. So far-reaching were their misdeeds that the prices of many commodities from the Continent rose very considerably.

In these days, when the rights of neutrals—real or alleged—are so much respected, it makes strange reading to learn that on occasion Henry III had no compunction in commandeering any foreign vessels

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he required for his own service. Although several new names appear for various types of ships, no marked change in their general build is evident, though cabins were introduced. Privateering was indulged in, for which licences were granted "to annoy our enemies by sea or by land wheresoever they are able, so that they share with us half of all their gain. . . ."

During the reign of Edward I two expeditions against Wales were undertaken by sea, and the fleet was used for the conflict with Scotland, but by far the most interesting naval transaction was a private war waged by some of the mariners of the south of England and the French. After a number of fights which failed to appease either side, a pitched battle was arranged to take place at a certain spot in the Channel. While the English could only man some sixty ships and the opposing side mustered three times that number, the latter was badly defeated. A few years later, when at Sluys assisting the Count of Flanders, the King totally failed to prevent the men of the Cinque Ports and of Yarmouth from quarrelling among themselves, as a result of which it is said the East Anglians lost over twenty ships.

Although the King reorganized the dispositions of the Navy by dividing the fleet into squadrons based on Yarmouth for the east and Portsmouth for the south, in addition to ships for the safeguarding of the west coast and Ireland, it was at Portsmouth that he concentrated craft preparatory to foreign service. Over fifty English and Irish towns were called upon to provide from one to three vessels, and the Cinque Ports fifty-seven. Gascony having been seized by Philip in satisfaction for the private war mentioned above, extensive preparations were made and

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accommodation found for 500 men-at-arms and 20,000 foot-soldiers to cross to France. Castellion and St Macau surrendered, but Bordeaux did not, and Charles of Valois, the French King's brother, more than held his own. A raid made upon Dover ended with the town's being set on fire, and the loss of considerably more men than the defenders, which was to be expected, though 5,000 dead out of 15,000 is certainly a large proportion.

No great sea-fight characterized the reign of Edward II, though the Navy was almost constantly employed in his warfare with the Scots, the Irish, and the French. Probably the largest English ship of his time did not exceed 240 tons. During his luckless occupation of the throne the title Chief Admiral was introduced, that of Admiral having been first used in this country by Edward I. Its holder was Sir William Leybourne, and Gervase Alard was styled 'Admiral of the fleet of the Cinque Ports.'

Two of the several contributing causes of the Hundred Years War were maritime and commercial. English and French seamen were striving for control of the Channel; similar rivalry existed for the increasing wool-trade in Flanders. At first Edward III was content to allow his allies to do most of the land-fighting, the nation he represented finding the necessary funds. When the English seriously entered the war in 1340 they started with an overwhelming victory that completely settled the question of the control of the Channel. What had been done at Damme was repeated at Sluys; Hubert de Burgh's faith in the offensive was also the belief of Edward III. The burning of Portsmouth and an attack on Southampton in 1338 had been rude reminders of the fact that an island is defenceless unless it have command of the

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sea. Retaliation followed an attempt on Rye in July 1339, the enemy being chased into Boulogne and part of the town set on fire, while a dozen captains were hanged and several prizes secured.

We are told that "pride goeth before a fall." In the following September the French ships were gathered in the Sluys (Swyn), their crews boasting that they would capture five hundred English towns and one hundred English ships before they returned home. Some of them put to sea with the object of achieving part at least of their ambition, but they encountered a violent storm which worked havoc, and those which survived were glad enough to welcome the low-lying coast of Flanders as a substitute for the chalk cliffs of England.

Accompanied by some 200 vessels, the King sailed on June 22, 1340, for Blankenberghe, where he was joined by about fifty more ships. Apparently his force was superior in numbers, for according to Edward's own statement the enemy's total was 190, though some of their vessels were superior in size to those under his command, and included several that had formerly belonged to the English Navy. When reconnoitred from the sandhills by knights who had been put on shore for the purpose, the ships were chained together in three divisions. Among the commanders was the Genoese admiral Barbenoire.

Some hours later the enemy fleet dropped down the river and took up stations nearer the entrance. This disposition was undoubtedly bad. Following an old practice, the ships faced the attackers bow to bow, making boarding exceedingly difficult, provided a frontal attack was the only available method. Had the flanks been protected by shore or shoal, the

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arrangement would have been satisfactory, but in this case the attacking ships had sufficient room to manœuvre at high tide. An opportunity was thus afforded Edward to crumple up one of the wings and then to move along the whole line and destroy it in detail, for neither centre nor opposite wing could render assistance to the portion attacked unless the vessels managed to slip the cables and chains that secured them to each other.

It was not until the 24th, apparently by reason of wind and tide, that the English were able to attack. Edward's largest ships, in which archers were disposed in liberal numbers, were stationed in the van, and between each was a smaller vessel containing men-at-arms. A second division was held in reserve. Soldiers were in the fighting-tops of the units of the French fleet with an ample supply of ammunition, including such formidable material as stones and lumps of iron.

In order to gain the wind and prevent the sun from blinding his men, the King's first movement was on a tack away from the enemy. "They take care of themselves and run away, for they are not the fellows to fight with us," some one remarked in the French fleet. Both suggestions were entirely wrong.

It was a different story when Edward had carried out his manœuvre. The English bore down on the left wing of their adversaries, and speedily showed when they came to close quarters that they meant serious business. They flung out their grappling irons, lashed themselves to the nearest enemy vessel, and before all was secure the men-at-arms were at death-grips with Normans, Picards, and Genoese. No quarter was given; no quarter was asked. Stones, arrows, hatchets, lances, and swords exacted death on both

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sides ; friend and foe fought with dogged tenacity. It is stated that one ship alone was laden with four hundred dead men when the conflict was over. The *Christopher*, an English ship which had been taken by the French some time before, was recaptured, hastily manned by English bowmen and mariners, and turned against her possessors of a few minutes earlier. Other vessels were taken prizes. The French van was utterly defeated.

All heart was taken out of the foe. Twenty-four vessels under Barbenoire managed to escape, though some were subsequently captured or wrecked. The second and third lines were less fortunate. Those of their companies who got into the boats when all idea of resistance was abandoned were drowned owing to overcrowding.

The following is a portion of Edward's letter to his son, "the earliest dispatch containing an account of a naval victory in existence," as Sir Harris Nicolas asserts :

"And we have you to know, that the number of ships, galleys, and great barges of our enemies amounted to one hundred and ninety, which were all taken except twenty-four in all, which fled, and some of them were since taken at sea ; and the number of men-at-arms and other armed people amounted to thirty-five thousand, of which number, by estimation, five thousand escaped, and the remainder as we are given to understand by some persons who are taken alive, lie dead in many places on the coast of Flanders. On the other hand, all our ships, that is to say, the *Christopher*, and the others which were lost at Middleburgh, are now retaken, and there are taken in this fleet three or four as large as the *Christopher*."

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It is said that there was none willing to tell Philippe de Valois of the disaster which had overcome the ships that were to have captured a hundred English vessels and five hundred towns. At last the King's fool was persuaded to broach the subject. This he did in a characteristic way by talking about the lack of bravery on the part of the enemy. Asked the reason for it, the fool replied that they were cowards "and dare not leap into the sea, as our gentlemen of Normandy and France did." The English losses were comparatively slight.

The English had repeated the successful manœuvre of Hubert de Burgh; we shall see the French repeating their error at the battle of the Nile four centuries later.¹

It was in "our ship-cog *Thomas*," in which he had fought at Sluys, that Edward embarked at Winchelsea ten years afterward for a further deed of naval prowess. Spain was already a growing power at sea, and although piracy was certainly not confined to that country, some of the Basque traders who had commercial dealings with Flanders had rather overstepped the mark by capturing several English ships and killing their crews. According to Edward, the Spanish had also threatened to destroy English shipping and secure absolute supremacy of the narrow seas. This vain and open boasting, so reminiscent of the French previous to Sluys, was to avail them nought in the day of reckoning.

It was the custom of the Spaniards to take a fleet of merchandise to Flanders in spring, dispose of the

¹ The sea is now a couple of miles from Sluys, and a canal and light railway run between the town and Bruges, some twelve miles distant. For its connexion with the Armada see *post*, p. 101.

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cargoes, and return with other goods to their home ports during summer. Early in May 1350 the King ordered various ships to be made ready. He would teach these freebooters a lesson. The news found its way across the North Sea, with the result that Don Carlos de la Cerda sent to Antwerp and hired a body of adventurers only too willing to risk their necks at sea for gold and booty. These men were well armed, and the Spanish commander felt confident that should the English fleet appear it would receive a warm reception.

Edward was in no hurry ; on the other hand he was not disposed to let his quarry give him the slip. Commending his cause to the God of Battles, he proceeded to Winchelsea Abbey with a brilliant retinue, and waited. His ships were ready for the fray, and every day he waited for the coming of the Spaniards. There was much merry-making, some drinking of the wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and considerable music from the minstrels. It was gay preparation for grim business, but perhaps they fought the better for it. Aloft, look-out men were on the watch ; below, monarch and knights abandoned themselves to amusement.

It was Sunday, a favourite day for fights, the precise date August 29th, time 4 p.m. or thereabouts. Those on deck scanned the horizon now and again and were rewarded by a line of blue and nothing more. Suddenly a voice made itself heard above the hubbub. " Ho ! I see something coming, which seems to be a Spanish ship. I see one, two, three, four—I see so many, so help me God, I cannot count them ! " A final bumper of wine was ordered by his Majesty, anchors were weighed, and German dances forgotten for more serious things.

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There was picturesqueness and pageantry enough as the line of the enemy bore down upon them. Streamers and embroidered banners gave colour to the scene, the tops were crowded with fighting-men, and the sails bellowed to the north-east wind. Most of the oncoming vessels were larger than those that were sailing to oppose them, "like as castles to cottages," according to Stow, but Edward set a splendid example to his followers by boldly telling the helmsman of his ship-cog *Thomas* to lay him against a big Spaniard in the van, "for I wish to joust with him." The two crashed, bringing down one of the masts of the enemy and drowning all in the top. The violence of the collision opened some of the seams of the *Thomas*, necessitating much baling, but the monarch was for boarding. "Grapple my ship to that," he commanded, "for I wish to have her." The Spaniard, still carrying a press of sail, passed on. "Let her go," one of his courtiers replied; "you shall have a better." He spoke truth. The tackle gripped the next ship, and his men had scarcely succeeded in getting the upper hand before it became obvious that if the *Thomas* were not abandoned she would sink with all hands. She was leaking like a sieve, and the men previously available to keep the water in check had other work to do. No humanity was shown to the survivors on the prize. They were seized and flung overboard.

The Black Prince's ship fared even worse than that of his father. Unable to clamber on board their larger adversary, there seemed every likelihood of the whole company going to the bottom, when the Earl of Derby came up and fought the enemy to a standstill. The same rough treatment was meted out to the Spaniards when they could resist no longer. The crew of the

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English ship barely escaped with their lives. Scarcely had the last man made good his foothold on the tall sides of the vanquished foe than the vessel he had just left foundered.

Perhaps the toughest fight of all was put up by the ship singled out for attack by Sir Robert de Namur in *Le Salle du Roi*. This gallant Flemish noble, who had enlisted in Edward's cause, made little or no headway, and to further complicate matters, the enemy was carrying his ship along with him. Despite shouts from the crew, no attempt was made at rescue by other vessels, either because dusk had fallen and their desperate straits were not recognized, or opportunity of doing so was withheld. Eventually Hanekin, Robert's squire, managed to cut the enemy's halyards. There was a short, sharp fight as the Englishmen hacked their way on board, and more Spaniards made holes in the water.

Thus the battle of Les Espagnols sur Mer was waged. At the end of the day seventeen Spanish ships had struck. As Froissart says, the fight had "given the King of England and his people plenty to do." There is no record of Edward's losses.

On this August day "Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster," then ten years of age, had his first taste of battle. He lived to be one of the *preux chevaliers* of his time and generation, and it may well be that the sights and scenes he witnessed off Winchelsea had more than a little to do with the formation of his acknowledged nobility of character.

Unfortunately in the last of the naval fights of this reign, also against the Spanish, a squadron was totally defeated off Rochelle. One ship was sunk, and the others—an uncertain quantity—were captured.

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The loss of Guienne followed, and whatever prestige England had on the sea rapidly declined. Without begrudging the money voted for the Navy, the Commons sorrowfully recorded that "twenty years since, and always before that time, the navy of the realm was so noble and so plentiful in all ports, maritime towns, and rivers, that the whole country deemed and called our Lord 'King of the Sea,' and he and all his country were the more dreaded both by sea and land on account of the said navy. And now it was so decreased and weakened from divers causes, that there was hardly sufficient to defend the country in case of need against royal power, whence there was great danger to the realm, the causes of which were too long to write; but the principal reason was that in time of war ships were often arrested a quarter of a year or more before they left the ports, without payment of the wages of the mariners during the whole of that time, or any remuneration being made to the owners of the ships for their equipment and expenses; of which they prayed a suitable remedy, as an act of charity."

Although Edward replied that it was "his pleasure that the navy should be maintained and kept with the greatest ease and advantage that could be," this pious hope was not fulfilled. England sadly deteriorated at sea, even allowed twenty-eight large merchant-ships and eight smaller vessels to be captured and burnt by the Spanish without bringing the miscreants to task.

During this long reign of fifty years a primitive form of compass was used. Guns and gunpower now formed part of the equipment of larger vessels, while castles were fitted fore and aft, as well as a miniature 'fighting-top' on the mast. In merchant-ships the latter was not a permanent structure.

CHAPTER V

The Age of Discovery

*He knew wel alle the havens as they were
Fro Gotland to the Cape de Finistere,
And every creke in Bretagne and in Spaine :
His barge ycleped was the Magdelaine.*

CHAUCER

ON the first meeting of Parliament after the accession of Richard II the attention of the King was called to the grievous state of the Navy. Exactly twelve months afterward the burnings of the enemy on the coast was stated to be one of the main causes of the poverty everywhere evident, as four years later rebellion was attributed to lack of protection at sea, notwithstanding the voting of large sums for the purpose. There was cause enough for grumbling. Within a short time of the death of Edward III Rye had been plundered and burnt, the Isle of Wight ravaged, and Winchelsea attacked. Rye and Winchelsea retaliated by crossing the Channel and sacking a Norman town. The faithful Commons then requested that as nothing had been done they might be released from the subsidy already granted. This the monarch refused, but promised that all the money should be used for the purpose for which it was intended.

After the truce of 1384-5 the Navy achieved so little, despite a threatened invasion by France, that a handful of men of Portsmouth and Dartmouth took

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the matter into their own hands, and captured or sank eight of the enemy's ships. Despite a bold attempt to besiege Brest, the idea had to be relinquished because the Duke of Lancaster found that it would take him a longer time than he anticipated. When the colossal preparations of Charles VI for the invasion of England were abandoned after one or two unsuccessful attempts to cross, it is not surprising that the people took up the cry of the faithful Commons. Froissart tells us that they asked what had become of the great enterprises and valiant men of England. "There is only a child for a king in France," they avowed, "and yet he gives us more to do than ever his predecessors had done." At last a number of vessels were got together, and they intercepted a Flemish fleet of about a hundred ships laden with wine, of which it is said that eighty were captured after a prolonged fight, but little else of importance was accomplished.

As "a work of charity and for the maintenance and increase of the navy of England" it was enacted that "all merchants of the realm of England shall freight in the said realm the ships of the said realm, and not foreign ships, so that the owners of the said ships may take reasonably for the freight of the same." This measure was the prototype of the Navigation Laws, about which something will be said in a later chapter.

Despite the fact that officially a truce existed between England and France, the sailors of the two nations were constantly fighting when opportunity offered. Each side called the other "pirates," probably with equal truth. Captures were made off the French coast; freebooting was prevalent off that of England. Plymouth was burnt and pillaged, for which retribution was

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exacted in Brittany by setting the town of St Matthew on fire and making prize of a number of ships laden with wine and other useful commodities. Landing in the Isle of Wight, the French met with so warm a reception that they thought it expedient to re-embark and leave their plunder behind. It is even stated that the hardy folk of the Wight, when again visited, offered to allow the invaders to land for six hours in order to get into proper trim and to fight them afterward. This sporting proposition was not accepted. The Navy under Admiral Lord Berkeley harried Brittany and Picardy; the Bretons under Sir William du Châtel attacked Dartmouth and were defeated. Vengeance for Sir William's death was taken a few weeks later, when the deceased warrior's brother sacked the town and burnt it almost to the ground. The commander then cruised about the coast for a couple of months, meeting little or no opposition, and after having filled his ships to repletion with whatever he deemed useful, returned to his home port. Sir Thomas of Lancaster, the King's second son, repaid the French in their own coin by burning a large number of towns and villages, including La Hogue and Harfleur.

The naval munitions of this period included guns, powder, stone shot, tampons (probably wads), bows and arrows, pavises, touches, and fire-pans.

A curious experiment was tried during the last decade of Henry IV. Merchants and shipowners undertook to guard the sea on certain terms, including the payment of subsidies, the retention of prizes, and the nomination of their own admirals. Captures were certainly made, but at the end of about seventeen months the royal authority was resumed.

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Henry V did something more than revive the Hundred Years War. He stood for, and created, a strong navy. When, within four years of his accession, he determined on one of his several expeditions to Normandy, no fewer than 1,500 vessels of various kinds were concentrated for service at Southampton. The vast majority of these were not the King's ships, of course, but craft belonging to merchants and the Cinque Ports. Included in the Navy proper were three two-masted carracks, one of which, called the *Mary of the Tower*, was of 500 tons, while its complement consisted of eighty-eight sailors, sixty-three lances, and 132 archers. Some of the vessels were gorgeously painted and decorated, red being a favourite colour, with figures at the head and stern. Arms were frequently emblazoned on the sails. Guns were of iron and brass, with iron and stone shot.

In 1415 Henry laid siege to Harfleur, the fleet blockading the port. Chains, stakes, and tree-trunks precluded the ships from entering the harbour, but on several occasions the French squadron emerged from its hiding-place and was driven back. After holding out for five weeks the town surrendered, and in the following month Agincourt was fought and won.

The spring of 1416 saw the French endeavouring to recover their lost port, and investing the place with a large army and fleet. The English Navy was evidently not in a fit condition at the time to make its influence felt, and as a result the enemy reigned supreme in the Channel, doing irretrievable damage to shipping. An attempt to destroy the King's ships at Southampton was thwarted, but considerable damage was done on the Isle of Portland, where many houses were set on fire. Following the blockade of

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Portsmouth and an attempt on the Isle of Wight, an expedition set out for France and arrived at the mouth of the Seine. From the eight Genoese carracks which the enemy had hired huge stones and lumps of lead were hurled at the lower English vessels, but such was the tenacity of their opponents that three "caracks horrible great and stoute" were captured, in addition to a large number of smaller craft. Two other large ships were wrecked, and the *Black Hulk of Flanders* was sunk.

Less than a year afterward the French were again defeated at sea under the leadership of the Earl of Huntingdon. On this occasion one of the obvious disadvantages of the platform forecastle was practically demonstrated. Either in an attempt to board or to ram several of the structures were torn away and their occupants flung into the water. On this occasion four carracks were taken prizes. A few days later Henry sailed for Normandy, accompanied by a numerous fleet of fighting-ships and transports, including 117 furnished by Holland, which was only four less than the total number in the round-up of English ports.

The naval events of the next four kings are neither important nor interesting. During the inglorious years of Henry VI Warwick the King-maker met a fleet of Genoese and Lübeck ships with cargoes of Spanish merchandise passing down the Channel under convoy. After a severe fight five sail were captured and taken into Calais. In 1475 Edward IV sailed with a powerful force for Calais to combine with Charles of Burgundy for the crushing of King Louis, but as his ally was not ready the English King, to the intense disgust of his followers, pocketed a handsome tribute

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for the privilege of peace and negotiated the usual matrimonial alliance. His successor only reigned a couple of months. Richard III, haunted by the fear of invasion as well as by much else, depleted the treasury in an attempt to render the island impregnable. The Earl of Richmond's expedition was driven off the coast, and considering himself safe, Richard foolishly reduced his armament. With a small force Richmond landed at Milford Haven, and marching to Bosworth, met and defeated the erstwhile Lord High Admiral.

The reliance of the Crown on the Mercantile Marine is abundantly evident when one glances at the list of vessels belonging to the Navy of Henry VII. So far as it is known only seven were added to the five already available; a dozen in all. Of the vessels which he inherited, seven passed out of the service. The heaviest armed—in the number of weapons at any rate—was the *Regent*, built in 1487, which totalled 225, its closest rival being the *Sovereign* of 141, which took the water in the same year. Although Henry VI had given a subsidy for new merchant-ships likely to prove useful to the Navy, it was the seventh English monarch of that name who really made the first serious attempt to meet obligations incurred in this respect.

It must be remembered that in this period of easy virtue at sea practically every vessel of any size was armed, and was therefore a useful auxiliary. When used for military purposes the rate of hire was one shilling per ton per month. In those days of the press-gang there was no fixity of tenure for those who longed for a life on the ocean wave and joined the Navy voluntarily. The pay was usually one shilling and three pence a week while the ship was at sea, and one shilling when in harbour. They had cold comfort,

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for the crew slept on deck, although the soldier-captain and the master each had a cabin. All guns were invariably placed on the upper deck and pointed over the side or gun-wall—hence ‘gunwale.’ Of these the breech-loading serpentine was the largest. Its charge was about five ounces of gunpowder, and it hurled a ball of about the same weight to a maximum distance of some 1,300 yards. The operation of loading and firing was evidently a somewhat lengthy and difficult process, for a serpentine could not discharge more than a couple of rounds an hour.

When the Pope proposed that Henry’s Navy should assist his Holiness in resisting the “Turk’s malice,” the Solomon of England would have none of it. In answering the Brief the King replied that his “counsellors, after long communication and great reasoning, thought that if the King should send any help or navy by the sea it should little profit, considering the far distance of those parts so to be besieged, troubled, or obsessed by the said Turk; and also, the English mariners have not been accustomed to sail any farther but to Pyses [Pisa], which is not half the journey, for it is six or seven months’ sailing from Pyses to those parts where they might do the Turk any annoyance; and so all the cost done by sea should little or nothing profit in this behalf.

“Item, the said counsellors say that the galleys coming from Vennes [Venice] towards England be commonly seven months sailing, and sometimes more. Also they say that if so be the King should send from his royaume his navy by the sea, the men being in the same should need twice or thrice victualling or they should come where they should apply, and yet then peradventure they should apply where no succour

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would be had. And also the said ships might be sore troubled with contrary winds, so that they should not come to do any good in this great cause ; and also considering the great storms and perils of the sea which commonly by fortune and hap parteth ships and driveth them to several coasts, and twisteth them often times to perish, and so there should be great costs and charges done by the King, and yet no annoyance thereby done to the said Turk."

Henry then dealt with the financial aspect of the proposed expedition, and suggested that as the other princes who were to take part were nearer the land of the infidel they could send 10,000 men at less expense than he could provide 2,000.

" Item, if the King should prepare captains and other men of war, and apparel and habiliments, and necessities to the said ships, it should be May, whatsoever diligence were done on the King's part, ere they should be ready to sail : and it should be the last end of September ere the said ships should pass the straits of Morrok ; and great difficulty to find any mariners able to take the rule and governance of the said ships sailing into so jeopardous and far parts. The premisses considered, it is hard and almost not feasible to send any navy thither for any profit by them to be done therein."

That Henry believed in unity of command is shown in another paragraph, after which he adds with delightful *naïveté* that either the King of France or of Spain shall be at the head of "so laudable an holy expedition." Their "commodities of ports, navies, and vitaill," and the nearness of "divers isles unto the said Turks," are given as reasons.

On the other hand he showed himself ready to assist



THE "MATTHEW," OF BRISTOL, CABOT'S SHIP

The Age of Discovery

the Pope if the latter were left "sole and destitute" of the personal assistance of the kings of France and Spain, provided that the Holy Father assigned a sure port "to which the King's grace with his army may come, and also shall provide sufficient navy, masters, and mariners, armours and habiliments of war and vitail, and all other necessary things," including sure and free journeying. Those monarchs who stayed at home were to contribute men and money.

With the Age of Discovery the commercial centre of the world shifted to Western Europe. In a magic circle of less than thirty-five years enterprising navigators wrought a series of marvels of far-reaching and lasting consequence. Bartholomew Diaz rounded the Cape of Good Hope; Columbus, believing he had arrived in Japan, discovered America; Vasco da Gama reached India; Magellan, a Portuguese sailing in a Spanish ship, entered the Pacific. Though the intrepid voyager who had navigated the rocky Straits of Tierra del Fuego was killed in the Philippines, one of Magellan's ships returned to Europe, sailing from the Sunda Islands across the Indian Ocean to the Cape of Good Hope, and thence to Spain. The first voyage round the world had been completed.

The routes taken by Columbus on his four voyages are not those traversed by the modern mariner. He was exploring, and that task is left to the Scotts and Shackletons of the race. Perhaps the ocean highway most nearly approaching the line of his original attempt is the sea-water lane traversed by steamers running between St Thomas and the Canary Islands, and on his second voyage, that between Martinique and Teneriffe. The tracks taken by him in 1498 and 1502 were more southerly.

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Mark the delay of the British in entering the fray—a national characteristic atoned for by dogged tenacity when once they had made up their mind. Newfoundland, our oldest colony, was discovered by a Venetian living at Bristol, John Cabot to wit. Small wonder that Lord Fisher deemed us one of the lost Ten Tribes. It may be so. Yet we have discovered more than the number originally mislaid. When Hakluyt claimed that Englishmen had always been “men full of activity, stirrers abroad, and searchers of the remote parts of the world,” he was anticipatory rather than matter-of-fact. Henry VII not only gave Cabot his commission, but bore part of the expense out of his privy purse, “wheryn dyuers merchauntes, as well of London as of Bristowe, adventured goodes and sleight merchandises. . . .”

The King would also have shared in the glory of Columbus but for a series of unfortunate happenings. The navigator's brother Bartholomew was sent to approach Henry in the matter, but unfortunately fell into the hands of pirates. On reaching England illness was added to poverty. Being a man of considerable spirit he allowed neither the one nor the other to defeat his purpose. Skilful in map-drawing, he set about making and selling ‘sea-cards.’ Success attended these efforts, and Bartholomew eventually being presented to the King, offered him a map of the world and proposed an expedition “for the discovery of the Indies.” We are told that the offer was “accepted with joyfull countenance,” and Christopher was asked to come to England. “But because God had reserved the sayd offer for Castile,” his son tells us, “Columbus was gone in the meane space.”

CHAPTER VI

Development and Decay

The world must be governed by force or fraud.

MACHIAVELLI

OF all England's many monarchs until the accession of Edward VII, none took a livelier interest in the development of the Navy than Henry VIII. He laid the foundations of the power that broke Spain. He followed in the steps of his father, who had built the first dry dock in England at Portsmouth, by founding dockyards at Woolwich and Deptford, Trinity House owes its existence to him, and he took a personal pride in new constructions whether of ships or of guns. The King studied the minutest details, encouraged afforestation so that there might be a plentiful supply of timber, erected coastal fortifications, encouraged Italian shipbuilders to this country, and placed the constitution of the service on a sound basis. In these matters his prompter was himself. He was never happier than when bidding godspeed to the fleet when it sailed on an expedition. Yet all his care did not prevent errors of administration and organization, for in 1522 the want of flesh, fish, and liquor prevented Fitzwilliam from following up his preliminary successes at sea.

The time-honoured system of ravaging and plundering still obtained. War with France broke out in 1511, with Sir Edward Howard, Lord High Admiral,

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harrying the coast of Brittany. Crossing to Brest in the following year, an engagement worthy of the Navy was fought at sea, when the enemy was defeated as the French fleet left port. The English *Regent* and the French *Cordelier*, falling on board one another, caught fire, and carried hundreds of men to the bottom.

Sir Edward, high-spirited and confident, again left Portsmouth in 1518 with twenty-four ships, but no French squadron met him. The enemy scurried back as quickly as possible, putting into Bertheaume Bay, where it remained under the protection of the forts. Determined on victory, the Admiral very unwisely attacked the French as they lay at anchor, and as a result one of his largest ships struck a rock and was lost.

Defeated but not dismayed, Howard turned his attention to a number of galleys from the Mediterranean which were to have joined the French at Brest, but having failed to do so had taken refuge on the beach of the island of Le Conquet, south-east of Ushant. Unable to use his big ships, Howard attempted a cutting-out expedition in small boats, with what result is reported by Sir Edward Echyngham as follows :

“The galleys were protected on both sides by bulwarks, planted so thick with guns and cross-bows, that the quarrels and the gonstons [gun-stones] came together as thick as hailstones. For all this the admiral boarded the galley that Preyer John [a corruption of Pregent] was in and Charran the Spaniard with him and sixteen others. By advice of the admiral and Charran they had cast anchor into [word illegible] of the French galley, and fastened the cable to the capstan that if any of the galleys had been on fire they

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might have veered the cable, and fallen off; but the French hewed asunder the cable, or some of our mariners let it slip. And so they left this [word illegible] in the hands of our enemies. There was a mariner wounded in eighteen places who by adventure recovered unto the buoy of the galley so that the galley's boat took him up. He said he saw my Lord Admiral thrust against the rails of the galley with marris pikes. Charran's boy tells a like tale, for when his master and the admiral had entered, Charran sent him for his hand gun which before he could deliver the one galley was gone off from the other, and he saw my Lord Admiral waving his hands and crying to the galleys, 'Come aboard again, come aboard again,' which when my Lord saw they could not, he took his whistle from about his neck, wrapped it together and threw it into the sea."

In due course the enemy retaliated in the usual way by scourging the coast of Sussex and burning Brighton. Howard's brother, Sir Thomas, sought revenge with another fleet, but the French retired, as before, though he afterward captured Terouenne and Tournai. Cherbourg fell in a joint expedition undertaken by the Emperor Charles V and Henry VIII in 1522, and Howard took Morlaix. In his wars with France the English King held the command of the sea, and always had a small patrolling force in the Straits of Dover and the Channel, winter and summer alike. Fitzwilliam drove back the escort of the Duke of Albany when it sailed from France for Scotland, and leaving some of his ships to watch the ports in which they had found refuge, wrought havoc in the neighbourhood of Le Tréport. In that harbour not a single ship escaped the flames.

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Following the capture of Boulogne by England in 1544, Francis I bestirred himself to wrest from Henry his undoubted supremacy at sea. By tremendous exertion in his own home ports, and considerable expense in chartering vessels from the Mediterranean, his floating forces rapidly outgrew those of his hated rival, though as events proved he put too much faith in the virtue of the galley armed with a solitary gun in the bow. A French fleet entered the Solent, and landed an army at Bembridge, in the Isle of Wight. The advance of the soldiery was checked, and a party sent to get water from the little stream that runs through Shanklin Chine was annihilated. The English fleet had retired into Portsmouth Harbour, and D'Annebault, the French admiral, was only deterred from entering it by insufficient knowledge of the intricacies of the channel. He confined himself to a series of attacks by some of the galleys, with little or no success. The English, however, suffered a grave misfortune by the loss of the *Mary Rose*, formerly Sir Edward Howard's flagship. She was capsized either by a sudden squall or when altering course—both explanations have been given. The ship certainly heeled over, and as the lower-deck ports were less than eighteen inches above the water-line, and had been left open, the water rushed in. As the guns were not fastened they broke loose and slid down the decks, completing the heavy list and causing her to capsize. Over 500 soldiers and sailors are believed to have perished. On leaving Havre the enemy had also suffered the loss of a big vessel, the *Philippe*, which was burnt.

D'Annebault made one or two incursions into Sussex before returning to France, where he disembarked some of his men and again sailed for England. Slipping



THE "HENRI GRACE À DIEU."

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out of Portsmouth, Lisle discovered the French at no great distance from Shoreham. Although the action was slight and inconclusive, it is notable that Lisle divided his fleet of 104 vessels into three squadrons, the Vanwarde, the Battle, and the Wing. We shall constantly meet these divisions in later pages as the Van, the Centre, and the Rear, or the Red, White, and Blue squadrons. The Van fought the enemy's Van, and so on. As reprisal for the attack on the English coast Le Tréport and its shipping were again burnt.

Lisle's flagship was the *Henri Grace à Dieu*, a four-masted ship with two gun-decks and lofty poop and forecastle, built in 1515, and sometimes confused with the *Great Harry*. She was of 1,000 tons, and carried 301 mariners, fifty gunners, and 349 soldiers.

"By the employment of Italian shipwrights," says an old writer, "and by encouraging his own people to build strong ships of war to carry great ordnance, Henry established a puissant navy, which, at the end of his reign, consisted of seventy-one vessels, whereof thirty were ships of burden, and contained in all 10,550 tons, and two were galleys, and the rest were small barks and row-barges, from eighty tons down to fifteen tons, which served in rivers and for landing men."

Another source of strength at this time was the privateer. Many a gallant gentleman of Devon and the West of England thought fit to obtain letters of marque for the purpose of dealing with the king's enemies in an individual capacity that promised probabilities of rich plunder. This practice was further developed under Edward VI and Mary, and reached its zenith under Elizabeth. Whatever it may have been morally,

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the idea was certainly extremely useful, for it relieved the Navy to an appreciable extent. It afforded excellent training in seamanship, gave Protestants a fine chance of venting their spleen on Papists, filled their purses when things went well, and still further embittered them against their enemies when affairs went ill.

Though Edward VI began his reign with fifty-three vessels carrying 2,085 guns—many of them, of course, of no great consequence and only useful for repelling boarders—he left it in a considerably reduced state, and the process of decay was unchecked by his sister. Mary's match with Philip of Spain was possibly sufficient excuse for this, though it must have been humiliating to her mariners and those of her subjects who took pride in their heritage, notwithstanding that by the marriage treaty no foreigner could hold command in Navy or Army. Not a ship stirred in response to the appeal of the commander at Calais when the French were about to attack the sole remaining English possession in France. Conquered by Edward III in 1347, the town was surrendered in 1558. At Gravelines a few ships put in a belated appearance, but did little else. England's greatest victory at sea during a troubled reign was won by Lord William Howard. It occurred when Philip came over to woo Mary. He was met by a small squadron, and as his vessels neither lowered their top-sails nor dipped their colours to the flag of St George, the Lord High Admiral put a shot across the bow of the Spanish admiral's flagship. It had the desired effect.

In this incident, trivial enough in one aspect but significant in another, we may discern England's new outlook. It was toward the open sea and the unknown West.

CHAPTER VII

In Elizabeth's Spacious Days

Whosoever commands the sea commands the trade ; whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself. RALEIGH

TO proselytize and to gain wealth were the lodestars that beckoned men to the New World when the importance of the discovery was fully realized. Cruelty and mismanagement in the name of his Most Christian Majesty of Spain obtained for a time. El Dorados, more real than the site of long-lost Paradise of which Columbus dreamed, were visualized and emptied of their treasures, but the light of colonial Spain flickered and went out, and the sea-Power of the Spanish Main dwindled into nothingness.

Exploration, religion, and commerce had much to do with the making of England's supremacy at sea during the spacious days of Elizabeth. She ceased to be insular in outlook, and a rosy optimism seemed to dominate the race as never before. "The searching and unsatisfied spirits of the English, to the great glory of our Nation," says Stowe, "could not be contained within the banckes of the Mediterranean or Levant seas, but they passed far toward both the Articke and the Antarticke Poles, enlarging their trade into the West and East Indies."

In the praiseworthy attempts to discover new trade-

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routes Portugal and Spain had undoubtedly triumphed, though five years before the succession of good Queen Bess the attempt of 'the Myserie and Companie of the Marchants Adventurers for the Discoverie of Regions, Dominions, Islands, and Places Unknowen' to find China and the East Indies by way of the northern and north-eastern seas had resulted in the navigation of a new route to Russia. Such was the origin of the famous Muscovy Company.

The belief is generally entertained, and is altogether wrong, that with the discovery of a seaway to India in 1486 the traffic of proud Venice with the Orient came almost automatically to an ignominious end. It undoubtedly had an evil effect on its sea-borne trade, as did the fall of Damascus, Alexandria, and Cairo into the hands of the Sultan, but the caravan routes were utilized to an appreciable extent, the goods being brought across the Balkan Peninsula to Spalato. Stock not disposed of at that busy centre was placed on vessels and taken to Venice. By about the middle of the sixteenth century, the galleons and caravels of the proud Republic ceased to make regular voyages to Britain and the Low Countries, but her traffic with the Levant continued until the dawn of the eighteenth century.

The neighbouring republic of Genoa, which shared with Venice the commerce of the Orient, was likewise affected by Vasco da Gama's discovery. At that time she was building goodly carracks of 1,600 tons, and many a Venetian and Genoese vessel was hired by England to take her wares to distant lands and sunnier climes. Venice did not entirely surrender to Antwerp and Lisbon, and to-day the wonderful City of the Rialto that had emerged from the mud carries on a flourishing

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export trade, which includes building materials of divers kinds, hemp, and paper. Quite close to the site of the battle of Actium (31 B.C.) the noble galleasses of Venice fought the Turks at Lepanto in 1571, when the Republic was aided by Spain and the Papal States. It may be that the result was an added incentive to Philip's ambition to contest England with the Armada.

Unfortunately the defeat of the Turks had no marked influence on the nefarious practices of the corsairs, who scourged the Mediterranean until the third decade of the nineteenth century. The names of such men as the Barbarossas, Dragut, and Ali were as much feared by legitimate mariners as was that of Drake on the Spanish Main. The expulsion of the Moors from Spain, when fanaticism on either side was rampant, led to the setting-up of the pirate republic of Salee. Readers with retentive memories will recollect that Robinson Crusoe was captured by a "Rover of Salee," and escaped after two years' imprisonment.

It is somewhat remarkable that this time should have been chosen by English merchants to turn seriously to the Mediterranean as an area for commercial enterprise. Hitherto they had been content to have their goods carried in foreign bottoms, but there gradually grew up a more or less regular line of traffic in English ships between Southampton and Bristol and Sicily, Crete, Cyprus, and Tripoli. Then came a lapse of a quarter of a century, followed by a resurrection of trade with the Levant on the part of the Turkey Company. That business was carried on with considerable risk is proved by the number of captures made by the Mussulmans, despite the Sultan's strict orders, in addition to those taken by the Barbary corsairs. The "hellish thraldome" of the unfortunates

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moved the Bishop of London to appeal to the Corporation in 1582 to "staye such entercourse with Infidells."

The first East Indiaman sailed from Woolwich on February 13, 1601, a date which doubtless upset the superstitious susceptibilities of some of her crew. She was bound "East of Suez," though the route she took was obviously not that of to-day, but round the Cape of Good Hope. James Lancaster, in command, had no scruples in such relatively small matters as the capture of Portuguese vessels and the filching of their cargoes. Early in June he reached Acheen, in Sumatra, where he was well received by Prince Ala-ud-dhin, who granted him trading privileges. At Bantam, in Java, Lancaster did much excellent business by disposing of the wares he had brought from England and "secured" during the voyage, and eventually reached the Thames after an absence of two years and eight months. "The passage to the East Indies," he reported, "lieth in $62\frac{1}{2}$ degrees by the north-west on the American side."

It was a notable triumph. The *Dragon*, Lancaster's largest ship, was of 600 tons, only 68 tons less than an armed East Indiaman launched at Blackwall a century and a half later. In due course the Company which laid the foundations of an empire within an empire became the largest shipping line in Britain. The type usually referred to as East Indiaman was not built during the Elizabethan period. It did not come into being until about 1772.

Early in the reign Elizabeth set about increasing her naval force, and Burchett tells us that "many of her wealthy subjects, who lived near the sea-coasts, set themselves to building of ships, so that in a short time

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those of the Crown and of private persons were become so numerous as, on occasion of any naval war, might employ 20,000 men. The good effects of these preparations were shortly after seen in the war the Queen undertook in behalf of the Protestants of France, wherein, besides the land forces she sent over to Normandy to their assistance, her ships, scouring the seas, sorely distressed their enemies by taking great numbers of prizes from them, and at length totally interrupting their trade."

Throughout the forty-four years that good Queen Bess occupied the throne adventurers assisted her with their private vessels. They were, in a word, privateers, even though their owners or other folk interested in them were highly respected members of society. There may have been patriotic reasons, but the primary motive was plunder and profit. In some of the expeditions not officially undertaken to punish her enemies the sovereign was not above having a pecuniary interest, and when Elizabeth invested money, be it said, she invariably expected, and usually exacted, an adequate return. Thus we find ships belonging to the Navy taking part in the shameful but profitable slaving expeditions of John Hawkins. Whether or not the hardened old sinner turned over a new leaf at a later period, when he and Frobisher were engaged in strictly legitimate warfare, is open to doubt, despite his assertion that "Paul planteth and Apollos watereth, but it is God who gives the increase." On this particular occasion Providence provided no prizes, and when Elizabeth heard the remark she is said to have cynically retorted, "God's death! This fool went out a soldier, and is come home a divine."

The disastrous expedition to the West Indies, which

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sailed in 1594 with the object of seizing Spanish bullion, is another case in point. Of the twenty-six vessels which took part in it only half a dozen belonged to the Queen. The remainder were owned by private adventurers. During it both Hawkins and Drake died and were buried at sea.

Perhaps no incident in the maritime history of the period reveals the grasping character of the shrewd and exacting woman who presided over the destinies of England than an incident which took place in 1592. Some ships owned by the Earl of Cumberland, a seaman of ripe experience with a turn for expeditions, fitted out at his own expense, together with others belonging to Raleigh and the Hawkins family, fell in with the Portuguese *Madre de Dios*. Unfortunately a little naval vessel which the carrack could have 'swallowed' happened to be present, and Elizabeth claimed and secured the greater part of the profit made from the sale of the rich East Indian cargo. It is stated that the wonderful assortment of silks, spices, carpets, and other goods captured so aroused the enthusiasm of the London merchants who saw them that the prize indirectly contributed to the formation of the East India Company.

Hitherto the Navy had been manned by soldiers rather than by sailors, but during the Elizabethan period we find the latter coming into their own, although in the Commonwealth we shall still come across instances of a man like Blake being put in charge of a fleet and combining the duties and title of General and Admiral. Although Drake was first and foremost a sailor, he was also a keen fighter on land, as in later times was Sir Edward Hobart Seymour, who led forces on shore for the relief of the besieged legations in Peking.

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Even more important, some sense of proportion was observed regarding the various types of vessels employed. Although there was no marked increase in the tonnage of the largest ships, there certainly was in the smaller. In the first year of the reign of Edward VI, the combined tonnage of the fifty-three vessels of the Navy was 11,268; in the last year of Elizabeth's rule the tonnage was 17,055 and the number of ships only forty-two. Diversity in the pieces of ordnance still obtained, ranging according to Sir William Monson from cast-iron cannon with a bore of 8 inches and a shot of 60 lb. to a rabinet of 1 inch firing a half-pound shot. Culverins of $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches discharging a ball weighing $17\frac{1}{2}$ lb. appear to have been considered useful weapons, for of the sixty-eight guns mounted in the *Triumph*, seventeen were culverins, only three fewer than the fowler chambers employed for repelling boarders. Until the coming of Fisher's *Dreadnought* in 1906 the frequent practice was to mount a medley of weapons.

How did it come about that, although nominally at peace, Englishmen could make raids on Spanish territory and capture Spanish ships? The question takes us back to the time of Columbus's discovery. Pope Nicholas V, with easy authority, had invested the Portuguese with all lands discovered during their voyages to the south and east. A little later Pope Alexander VI decided that all the land to the west of a line drawn 300 miles west of the Azores should belong to Spain, and that on the east to Portugal. This was not at all in keeping with the notions of Elizabethan sea-dogs, who wished to share in the commerce of the New World, and were certainly not disposed to regard the adjudication of wearers of

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the Triple Tiara in such matters as legally binding. The Queen on her part refused to recognize America as Spain's monopoly, and as we have seen, became a partner in some of the expeditions. Those were not the days when international complications could be brought about by the murder of an Englishman in some remote part of the world, and if certain adventurous spirits among her subjects cared to run the risk of sudden death it was no business of hers. It was little short of amazing what Philip of Spain stomached before open hostilities were declared. On one occasion Hawkins fired on a galley loaded with captives from the Netherlands, and after releasing them sent them home. This, it must be conceded, was somewhat humiliating to the greatest sea-Power of the day, but nothing happened other than a complaint from the ambassador. "Your mariners," he told Elizabeth, "rob my master's subjects on the sea, and trade where they are forbidden to go. They attack our vessels in our very harbours and take our prisoners from them. We have borne with these things, attributing them rather to passion or rudeness of manners than to any deliberate purpose of envy; but, seeing there is no remedy and no end, I must now refer to my sovereign to learn what I am to do. I make, however, one concluding appeal to your Majesty. I entreat your Majesty to punish this last outrage at Plymouth, and to preserve the peace between the two countries."

Other great ocean-warriors there were, but the sea-history of Elizabeth's day centres to a very appreciable extent around the personality of Francis Drake. Heaven knows, there is romance enough for a dozen folk in this sea-king of Devon. Cradled on a farm, breeched in a rotting hulk on the Medway,

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brought up in the environment of ships new and old within hail of Chatham dockyard, taught the democratic creed of a Protestant father who lost all through Catholicism, mentally nourished on a hatred of Spain as of the devil, hardened by an apprenticeship on a Channel coaster, and finally taking service in the Navy at twenty-four or thereabouts, Drake was to the people of England their own particular representative on the high seas.

To him the offensive was a moral and a strategic principle. "To seek God's enemies and her Majesty's where they may be found," to quote his own words, was the *alpha* and *omega* of his creed. It was his religion. What Nelson did at Copenhagen was done by Drake at Gravelines, as we shall discover in a later chapter.

What manner of man was this commander who combined hot courage with a cool head? Let a captured Spanish commander, Don Francisco de Zarate to wit, tell us in a letter recently discovered by Lady Elliott-Drake :

"He received me favourably," the Don writes, "and took me to his room, where he made me be seated, and said to me : ' I am a friend to those who speak the truth, that is what will have the most weight with me. What silver or gold does this ship bring ? ' . . . We spoke together a great while until the dinner hour. He told me to sit beside him and treated me from his dishes, bidding me have no fear, for my life and goods were safe ; for which I kissed his hands.

"This English General," he goes on, "is a cousin of John Hawkins ; he is the same who about five years ago took the port of Nombre de Dios ; he is called Francis Drake ; a man of some five and thirty years, small of stature and red-bearded, one of the greatest

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sailors on the sea, both from skill and power of commanding. His ship carried about 400 tons, is swift of sail, and of a hundred men, all skilled and in their prime, and all as much experienced in warfare as if they were old soldiers of Italy. Each one, in particular, takes great pains to keep his arms, he treats them with affection, and they treat him with respect. . . . I endeavoured to find out whether the General was liked, and every one told me he was adored."

Here is what happened on Sunday, August 9, 1578, when Drake returned home from his expedition to Nombre de Dios, 'the Treasure-house of the World,' and marching by way of the Cordilleras, was the first Englishman to gaze on the fabled Pacific. The news "did so speedily pass over all the church, and surpass their minds with desire and delight to see him, that very few or none remained with the preacher, all hastening to see the evidence of God's love and blessing towards our gracious Queen and country."

CHAPTER VIII

The Menace of the Armada

The navy of England may be divided into three sorts, of which the one serveth for the wars, the other for burden, and the third for fishermen, which get their living by fishing on the sea.

HOLINSHED

ALMOST up to the last generation the importance of the Armada was deemed to be mainly theological. Boys and girls left school with the impression that the underlying idea of its projector was to propagate the view of that section of the Church to which he belonged. Providence, being presumably Protestant, scattered the fleet in the nick of time and saved England. This compound of error was usually garnished with the celebrated story of the admirals playing bowls on Plymouth Hoe.

Actually the main causes that led to Philip of Spain's struggle with England were two. The first was the constantly repeated attacks on his ships and territory by Drake and other adventurers, and Elizabeth's refusal either to punish the marauders or stop what Philip regarded as their lawless deeds, and the second was the recognition of the Dutch Republic, brought into being by his rebellious subjects aided and abetted by the English Queen.

Although Howard of Effingham, Hawkins, Drake, Raleigh, and other practical seamen urged that ships were the proper means of resisting invasion, a

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considerable amount of time, energy, and money was spent on internal defence. There was then no regular army, although each county had a levy of armed men who met occasionally but not regularly, and London and other large centres had their trained bands. On this occasion the capital provided 20,696 men, not included in the total of 87,281 foot and horse that England and Wales were called upon to furnish.

An army of 22,000 foot and 2,000 horse was stationed at Tilbury for the defence of London ; a second army consisting of 28,900 was placed in Essex "for the defence of her Majesty's person," and a third and more formidable army of 27,000 foot, 407 heavy horse, and 1,961 light horse was "to resist the landing, and oppose the progress of the enemy."

Elizabeth first issued instructions to the lord-lieutenants of all the maritime counties to put the districts under their charge in a state of defence. The captains in each lieutenancy were shown the positions they were to occupy, the points needing batteries and earthworks, and were ordered "to have roads and fords repaired, and cross-bars ready, to stop the enemy after landing." Special attention was paid to Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Dorset, Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk, which were deemed the most vulnerable points. In Dorset, for instance, each district provided fifty carriages for conveying provisions. Every parish furnished a foot-post, and every market-town a horse-post. The cattle were to be driven inland and provisions burned should there be any risk of their being captured by the Spaniards.

Returns were also made of the number of ships and men in every port, the number of the former being 1,634 and of the latter 16,259, including masters,

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mariners, fishermen, and wherry-men. The inquiries thus made led to several reforms in such matters as the wages of the men in the Navy, which were increased, and also to accommodation for the fleet being provided at the Isle of Wight, Weymouth, Dartmouth, Plymouth, and Falmouth. Many of the seaport towns were called upon to furnish both ships and men to augment the regular fleet. In this matter the City of London was again to the fore, and provided thirty vessels and 2,130 men. The Queen's ships numbered thirty-four, Drake had thirty-two merchant-ships serving under him, Howard thirty-three merchant-ships and twenty coasters, Seymour twenty-three coasters, and twenty-three other vessels 'joined up' voluntarily with the coming of the Armada.

The disparity in the size of the ships of the opposing forces was not nearly so alarming as popular belief has made it. In the Queen's ships we find the *Triumph* and the *White Bear* of 1,100 and 1,000 tons respectively, and in those of Philip II one galleon of 1,249 tons, one of 1,200 tons, one of 1,160 tons, one of 1,150 tons, one of 1,100 tons, one of 1,050 tons, and one of 1,000 tons. There is reason to believe that the official Spanish measurements erred on the side of exaggeration, for the *San Salvador*, listed at 958 tons, was reported on being captured as of 600 tons only. It is more than likely that the surveyors erred, but scarcely to so great an extent as over 300 tons. What was far more important than making a brave show was that the English vessels were considerably more heavily armed and served, and better sailers.

England's partiality for 'muddling through' was evident in the trying days of the Armada. The scandal of the shell shortage of 1915 had its counterpart in

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1588. Writing to the Lords of the Council on March 30th of the latter year, Drake notes, "consider of our proporcions in powlder, shotte and other munycion . . . which proporcion in powlder and shotte for our greate ordynance in H.M.'s shippes is but one daie and halfes serveyce. . . . Good my lords I beseeche you to consider deeplie of this, for it importeth but the losse of all. . . . I have sente unto your good Lordships the note of such powlder and munytyon as are delivered unto us for this great serveyce, which in truthe I judge to be just a thirde part of that which is needefull, ffor if we should wante it when we shall have moste neede thereof it will be too late to sende to the Tower for it."

Nearly four months later, and only two days before the battle off Portland Bill, Lord Charles Howard penned the following to Walsingham: "Sir, for the love of God and our country let us have with sume sped some graet shote sent us of all bignes, for this sarvis wyll continew long, and sume powder with it."

"Ther must be grate care taken," Drake urges on July 29th, "to send us monycyon and vittuall whether soever the enemy goeth."

This want of efficiency was as nothing compared to that of the Spaniards. The idea of the invasion of England was first mooted to Philip by Alvaro de Bazan, Marquis of Santa Cruz, a leader of undoubted merit and bravery, possessing the confidence of all who served under him, and known as the 'never-conquered captain.' In August 1588 he proposed that the fleet should be prepared for service for use in the following year, which would allow of the completion of nine galleons then on the stocks. Nothing of consequence was done until the beginning of 1586, when Santa Cruz

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again brought the matter before the King's notice and received a reply asking for more detailed particulars. To do the job thoroughly the Marquis asked for a main squadron of 510 craft, of which 150 were to be big ships, and a secondary squadron that would bring the total up to 596, including transports for no fewer than 55,000 men and 1,200 horse-soldiers. Altogether the floating population of the Armada would be 94,222. The King hesitated and was lost. It would involve vast wealth, and Philip was not disposed to foot so big a bill. Philip's notion was that Santa Cruz should secure command of the Channel and the North Sea and cover the crossing of Parma's army from the Netherlands, which was then waging war against the United Provinces. Preparations were begun without further delay, but in order that the big secret should not leak out the number of those who were entrusted with information as to the whys and wherefores of the undertaking was strictly limited.

Philip's elaborate precautions availed nothing. News of the shipbuilding going on in Spanish ports reached England, and the terrible "El Draque" was sent off to report. Of the thirty ships that he took with him only four and a couple of pinnaces belonged to the Navy proper. The others went in the hope of making a profit on the voyage, and were not chartered by the Queen.

It was on this occasion that Drake "singd the King of Spain's beard." In the outer harbour of Cadiz he found eighteen ships preparing, and burned the lot. Then he landed at Cape St Vincent, plundered the monastery and set it on fire, and after taking several castles, captured a number of ships having valuable cargoes. Off the Azores he took a prize richly laden with bullion, precious stones, silk, and spices, and

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having done what he had set out to do, plus a little more, sailed for Plymouth. The invasion, planned for the summer of 1587, was again postponed. In the following year the bold adventurer asked to be allowed to take the offensive again, but the Queen did not grant his petition.

Santa Cruz, the 'Iron Marquis,' died in February, 1588, and the King filled—or thought he could fill—his place with Don Alonso Perez de Guzman, Duke of Medina Sidonia, a wealthy aristocrat totally unsuited to the post. He detested the sea and he hated his job. It is to his credit that he tried to avoid accepting the appointment, but the King would regard no excuse as valid, despite pleas of sea-sickness and catching cold, and appointed him "Captain-General of the Ocean Sea."

The paring process finally reduced the complement of the Armada to 29,433 men, of whom 10,138 were oarsmen and sailors. With Parma's 30,000 soldiers, the total number of warriors available would be less than 50,000.

Delay followed delay, but at long last Medina Sidonia announced that he was ready. His instructions were to sail to the North Foreland and cover Parma's passage. While the Duke was informed that the English would fight at a distance "on account of the advantage he has in artillery," and would aim low and as near to the water-line as possible, his method of fighting was to be the time-honoured 'close quarters.' All this is much to the point and thoroughly sound, but the Duke was not to fight except as a last resort. Medina Sidonia must have read the following with no little satisfaction: "This instruction as to fighting is to apply if there is no other means of securing the passage

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to England of my cousin the Duke of Parma, for it will be well if, keeping your forces intact, you can secure the same result either by misleading the enemy, or in some other way." After the army had landed the Admiral was to blockade the Thames, and following the subjugation of England an attempt on Ireland might be made. Should anything preclude Parma from crossing, Medina Sidonia was to try and take possession of the Isle of Wight.

Parma was ready with 17,000 men, 1,000 light horse, and 300 transport vessels. This information came to the Admiral shortly before the first ships of the Armada hoisted their gorgeously painted canvas on May 30, 1588, and departed from Lisbon. Trouble began at once. The weather was hot and tainted much of the meat, the wind was wrong and precluded anything but the slowest progress; then a mild gale came on and searched the weak points of the ships. Leaks, broken spars, and split sails were included in the casualties, and the Admiral's flagship and one or two other vessels put into Coruña. The remainder of the Armada continued on their voyage to the Scillies, the general *rendezvous* arranged in case the fleet became divided. Some of the galleons, transports, and store-ships actually arrived at the islands, and not finding the others there, returned to Spain before the Admiral had completed his repairs. So far no ship had foundered, and after concentrating at Coruña the Armada made a second start on July 12th. By the 19th the mighty armament was off the Lizard. Lord Howard was then lying in Plymouth Sound. The wind was with the Spaniards, and had Medina Sidonia availed himself of the opportunity he could have sailed into the Sound and fought at close quarters, since the English would

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have had great difficulty in getting out. The Admiral, lacking "the supreme gift of insubordination," preferred to be guided by the letter of the King's instructions and lost a unique chance. It is only fair to add that at the council of war held on the *San Martin* several of the admirals and generals did not agree with their superior officer, but were overruled. The present breakwater is built on shoals which loomed large in the eyes of some of the sailors on this occasion. They argued that they would not be able to attack in line abreast, and that as they entered in line ahead each ship would be attacked individually. The 'safe' course was adopted, and it proved disastrous.

While the Armada was lumbering up Channel in drizzle and mist, Howard's fleet was carefully feeling its way out to give chase and bring it to battle.

CHAPTER IX

Fighting Spain in the Channel

The advantage of time and place in all martial actions is half a victory ; which being lost is irrecoverable.

DRAKE

WHEN some of the Spanish ships had been reported off the coast before their recall to Coruña, Howard had sailed from Plymouth hoping "in God we shall meet with some of them." The pious wish of the commander-in-chief was not fulfilled, though he scoured the sea between France and the Scillies, and Drake and Hawkins patrolled with lynx-eyed vigilance.

The constantly recurring hope of Drake that his wish to sail for the Spanish coast might be fulfilled is almost pathetic. He makes a final appeal to Howard :

"To maintain my opinion that I have thought it meetter to go for the coast of Spain, or at least more nearer than we are now, are these good reasons following, written on board her Majesty's good ship the *Revenge*, this fourth of July 1588 :

"The first, that hearing of some part of the Spanish fleet upon our coast, and that in several fleets, the one of 11 sail, the other of 6 sail, and the last of 18 sail, all these being seen the 20th and 21st of June ; since which time, we being upon the coast of France, could have no intelligence of their being there, or passing through our Channel ; neither hearing, upon our own coast, of their arrival in any place, and speaking with

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a bark, which came lately out of Ireland, who can advertise nobody of their being in those parts, I am utterly of opinion that they are returned, considering what weather they have had since that time; otherwise they could [? not] have been here without our knowledge.

“I say further, that if they be returning, our staying here in this place shall but spend our victual, whereby our whole action is in peril, no service being done. For the lengthening of our victual by setting a straiter order for our company, I find them much discontented if we stay here; whereas if we proceed they all promise to live with as little portion as we shall appoint unto them.

“Our being upon the coast of Spain will yield us true intelligence of all their purposes.

“The taking of some of their army shall much daunt them and put a great fear amongst them.

“My opinion is altogether that we shall fight with them much better cheep¹ upon their own coast than here; for I think this one of the unmeetest places to stay for them.

“To conclude, I verily believe that if we undertake no present service, but detract time some few days, we shall hardly be able to perform any matter of importance.”

It is to the everlasting credit of Howard that he recognized the force and wisdom of his lieutenant's arguments, and acting against orders, gave instructions for the fleet to sail for Corñua. The wind, and the wind only, thwarted them. A south-wester sprang up, and the ships were compelled to return. On the day that Howard reached Plymouth Medina Sidonia put

¹ On better terms.

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to sea. "Sir," wrote Howard to Walsingham, "the southerly wind that brought us back from the coast of Spain brought them out."

There is no need to disbelieve the story of Howard, Drake, and other sea-kings playing bowls on Plymouth Hoe, and that the red-bearded son of Devon bade them continue on their receiving news of the presence of the Armada because there was time enough to finish and to beat the Spaniards afterward. It fits in with what we know of the man's personality, and goes back to the time when some of Drake's contemporaries were living.

During the night of July 20th many of the English ships had left port, crossed the enemy's front, and secured the windward position for the forthcoming attack. Sending the *Defiance* to fire a gun at the enemy to announce that it was open war, on the following morning Howard endeavoured to reach the Spaniards before the now dying wind was completely exhausted. The formation of the enemy was not the elongated crescent, as is usually supposed. Ahead were the squadrons of Portugal and Castile, the right wing or vanguard consisted of the Guipuzcoan and Levantine squadrons, and the Andalusian and Biscayan squadrons formed the left wing or rearguard. These wings were thrown back somewhat, which may account for the popular idea of the half-moon. In the centre, slightly ahead of them, and covered by the wings, were the store-ships and light craft.

The commander-in-chief, now joined by several additional vessels variously estimated as numbering from eight to eleven, attacked the Levantine squadron, Howard in the *Ark* (800 tons) tackling *La Rata Coronada* (820 tons) as he passed, his followers doing the same as they came up in line. The Lord Admiral then

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proceeded to pay his attentions to the Biscayan squadron, on the left, and two galleons met him broad-side on. Their endeavour was to come to close quarters, but in this they were thwarted. Time and time again Howard, Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher passed by and returned, pouring a withering fire into the vitals of Admiral Juan Martinez de Recalde's flagship and her consort, and completely cutting them off. Unfortunately the appearance of Medina Sidonia's *San Martin* and other ships compelled Howard to abandon the fight after considerable damage had been done.

Trouble also came for the Spaniards in another direction. The flagship of Pedro de Valdes, admiral of the Andalusian squadron, in attempting to go to the rescue of Recalde, got into collision with two vessels, and an explosion occurred on the *San Salvador* that set her on fire, did a vast amount of damage, and put her out of action. Howard now attempted to cut off the disabled ships, but Medina Sidonia's intervention prevented him from pressing the attack, and he was obliged to withdraw.

"We had them in chase," wrote Drake to Lord Henry Seymour, in command of the squadron based on Dover, "and so coming upon them there hath passed some cannon shot between some of our fleet and some of them, and as far as we perceive they are determined to sell their lives with blows. The fleet of the Spaniards is somewhat above a hundred sail, many great ships; but truly I think not half of them men-of-war."

Several vessels stood by the *Neustra Señora del Rosario*, which had been in collision, and Medina Sidonia endeavoured to give her a tow. Stormy weather and the Duke's anxiety to press on led to her abandon-

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ment. During the night Drake, following the Armada and leading the English fleet, saw several ships going down Channel. Putting out the poop-lantern which guided the vessels following him, he gave chase, thinking that the Spaniards were doubling back. After finding that they were traders he came across the abandoned *Rosario*. Don Pedro surrendered, and the prize was sent into Weymouth. This is Drake's own story, but there were others who stoutly maintained that the action was deliberately planned. His mysterious disappearance certainly threw the fleet into some confusion. A little later the *San Salvador*, badly damaged by the explosion and unable to keep up with the remainder of the fleet, was abandoned. She was taken by Hawkins, and although leaking badly, duly arrived at Weymouth.

No further fighting occurred until the 23rd, when the two fleets were off Portland Bill. Frobisher's *Triumph* and five other ships were isolated near the land, and Medina Sidonia sought to cut them off. He might have succeeded in this had not the wind veered from north-east to west, giving the English the weather-gauge. They put up so splendid a fight that the hopes of the Spanish for close action were completely shattered. Frobisher held the attacking galleons and galleasses at bay until Howard got into touch with him, when the Duke resumed his course up Channel in the direction of the Isle of Wight, his dogged enemies following in his wake. The *Santa Aña* had been badly handled by the English, and Medina Sidonia's own flagship had received a broadside which had wrought considerable devastation on board.

A few shots at long range were exchanged on the 24th, but Howard was in no humour to give battle until he received the munitions of which he was starved.

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Off Dunnose, between St Catherine's Point and Culver Cliff, with scarcely a puff of wind to aid the competitors, fighting began again on the following day. The Spanish admiral sent a swift vessel to inform Parma that he was approaching, and urging him to join hands and accomplish their purpose. Sailing in four squadrons, Howard in the *Ark* and Hawkins in the *Victory* forming the centre, Frobisher in the *Triumph* the left, and Drake in the *Revenge* the right, Howard first paid attention to a galleon which had been unable to keep up with the others, and as the wind was too light for any of his large ships to overtake her, he ordered some of Hawkins's vessels to be towed by rowers in the direction of the *San Luis*. The tow-boats received so warm a reception at the hands of the Spaniards that the crews were obliged to cast off. By this time another galleon and several galleasses were endeavouring to come to the help of the *San Luis*, but the *Ark* and others of Howard's squadron had also started, and a duel of sorts ensued. One or two of the ships on both sides were somewhat roughly handled, but our information about the action is scanty. Whereas Howard fought at a range that precluded boarding, Medina Sidonia tried to engage him at close quarters more suited to his smaller guns. "A hot fray," wrote Hawkins, "wherein some store of powder was spent and, after all, little done," but no invasion of the Isle of Wight took place. The Spaniards broke off the fight and proceeded up Channel, followed by Howard. In the evening of the 27th the Armada was anchored off the French coast between Calais and Gravelines, with Howard watching to seaward, and reinforced by three dozen ships under Lord Henry Seymour and Sir William Wynter.

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Medina Sidonia sent a further urgent message to the Duke of Parma begging him to put to sea. This the latter was unable to do, for an efficient Dutch squadron under Justinus of Nassau was waiting to deal with his transports immediately they issued from Nieuport, Sluys, and Dunkirk.

"Most joyful I shall be," Parma had written to Philip, "to see myself with these soldiers on English ground, where, with God's help, I hope to accomplish your Majesty's demands." Though he could do nothing but sit tight, his naval colleague was within seven leagues of his destination, despite the harrying of the English sea-dogs and the fighting of three actions.

On the following day Howard received munitions. Something also came to hand for Medina Sidonia. It was a dispatch from Parma saying that he would not be ready for another week, and that before the army of invasion could make exit it would be necessary to remove the menace of the Dutch ships blockading the mouths of the estuaries.

CHAPTER X

The Flight of the Armada

We have the army of Spain before us, and mind, with the grace of God, to wrestle or fall with them.

DRAKE

IN Dover Harbour certain rods were in pickle for the Spaniards. A number of old vessels had taken on highly inflammable cargoes chiefly consisting of tar-barrels and fagots. These fire-ships, as they were called, were the rough and ready torpedoes of the old-time Navy. Drake had used them with terrible effect at Vera Cruz, and they were to be brought into service time and time again. The idea was simple and obvious enough. Manned by volunteers, the fire-ship was used when the enemy was to windward. At great risk she was taken as near as possible, her helm fixed so that she would keep in the desired direction, and then set on fire, the crew making their escape as best they could. She was first cousin to the famous Q boats of the Great War, which looked like weather-beaten old tramps and turned out to be heavily armed men-of-war.

At the council held on board the *Ark* it was decided to send to Dover for these engines of destruction. Sir Henry Palmer set off to get them. When he had gone some one remarked that he would not be in time to catch the tide, and it was on wind and tide that success or failure mainly depended. It was immediately decided to try the experiment that night. To-morrow

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might be too late. Drake offered a ship, and seven others were promptly earmarked. Then began the job of getting as much combustible stuff on board as was to hand in the limited time at their disposal. At midnight all was ready. Medina Sidonia was not caught napping. His patrols were out. So far they had seen nothing. Suddenly eight blazing ships were bearing down on the Armada. In their haste to get away from these terrors of the night cables were cut, collisions were frequent, and the stately lines of a short time before were no longer either stately or lines. Yet the fire-ships as such were damp squibs. No Spanish vessel was touched by the consuming fire. With the dawn the Spanish fleet was in a state of confusion. The Armada had been rooted out. The *San Martin* fired guns for the ships to anchor. This most of them could not do because their tackle was at the bottom. In its sequel, therefore, the work of the fire-ships was successful. The flagship was attended by a few galleons, and four galleasses were endeavouring to get under the guns of Calais Castle, but the remainder of the Armada was scattered abroad to the north-east, off Gravelines.

On July 22nd it was discovered that the *San Lorenzo*, the flagship of Don Hugo de Moncada, which had come into collision with one of the Levant galleons in the confusion of the previous night, had driven ashore. Howard marked her for his own, but knowing the dangerous nature of the ground, cast off his long-boat with fifty or sixty men, an example followed by another ship. They were received by a hail of shot from the musketeers, who fired from the cover of the bulwarks, while the English soldiers and sailors were without the slightest protection. When Moncada was killed

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everybody on board completely lost their heads. The majority of the men jumped overboard, and while some escaped by swimming ashore, many were drowned. Then two "handkerchers upon two rapiers" were hoisted in token of surrender. Those who had refused to desert the ship were sent to Dover.

Meanwhile Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher were after far more important fry. The Spanish commander was in an isolated group of half a dozen ships, but doing his best to overtake his scattered squadrons. Then he changed his plan, and sending a small vessel to tell them to rejoin him, awaited the coming of the English. As each of Drake's ships drew near they fired a broadside at point-blank range at the *San Martin*, and then proceeded in the direction of the main fleet. For a time both Hawkins and Frobisher confined their attention to the group which Drake had just left, and the burden and heat of the day fell mainly on the intrepid man of Devon who had singed the King of Spain's beard. While Howard and Seymour were going to the assistance of Hawkins and Frobisher, none came to El Draque, who held on with dogged tenacity while Medina Sidonia's squadrons endeavoured to rally to the Duke's support.

"God hath given us so good a day in forcing the enemy so far to leeward," Drake communicated to Walsingham, "as I hope in God the Prince of Parma and the Duke of Sidonia shall not shake hands this few days; and whensoever they shall meet, I believe that neither of them will greatly rejoice of this day's service." "The fight," wrote Wynter to the same, "continued from nine of the clock until six of the clock at night, in the which time the Spanish array bore away N.N.E., or north by east as much as they could, keeping

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company one with another. . . . I deliver it to your honour upon the credit of a poor gentleman, that out of my ship was shot, 500 shot of a demi-cannon, culverin, and demi-culverin; and when I was furthest off in discharging any of the pieces, I was not out of the shot of their harquebus, and most times within speech of one another; and surely every man did well. No doubt the slaughter and hurt they received was great, as time will discover it; and when every man was weary with labour, and our cartridges spent, and munitions wasted—I think in some altogether—we ceased, and followed the enemy.”

“In our last fight with the enemy, before Gravelines, the 29th of July,” Howard tells Walsingham, “we sunk three of their ships, and made some go near the shore, so leak, as they were not able to live at sea. After that fight, notwithstanding that our powder and shot was well near all spent, we set on a brag countenance and gave them chase, as though we had wanted nothing.”

The three ships mentioned by the Lord Admiral were all lost during a sudden squall, when the fight was broken off. During it the *Maria Juan* capsized, and the *San Mateo* and the *San Felipe*, both of which had been badly mauled, were abandoned, and afterward captured. They drifted on to the shoals, a fate which Medina Sidonia was informed awaited the rest of the Armada unless he ordered it into the North Sea.

On the following day he noted, “The enemy remained aloof, seeing that the whole Armada must be lost.” Though a change of wind saved him from the banks of Zeeland, he had lost touch with Parma. The die was cast in the cabin of the *San Martin*. While there was much grumbling and indignation on the

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part of the fighting minority, it was decided at a council of war that the fleet should return to Spain *via* the north of Scotland. It might be a hazardous proceeding, but neither ships nor men were in condition to continue hostilities. No fewer than 600 men had been killed in the late battle, and 800 wounded. Many more were sick. Damages and leaks were numerous; shot and powder were alarmingly low. For that matter Howard was also awaiting munitions and stores, and by reason of their absence was equally disinclined to fight. While the Lord Admiral knew that his wants would be supplied, Medina Sidonia was equally certain that his would not. Wynter and Seymour were now to co-operate with Justinus in the blockade of Parma's ports, while Howard and the others followed the Armada, Drake with the vanguard. Off the Firth of Forth the Navy and its auxiliaries bade farewell to the fleeing enemy. Howard had proved to his own satisfaction that the Duke's one and only purpose was to get home as speedily as possible. A final fight was proposed, but got no further. There "was not munition enough to make half a fight."

When the Armada reached Spanish ports it had suffered the loss of no fewer than sixty-four vessels, of which only seven were accounted for ere Medina Sidonia turned tail. The remainder perished by shipwreck. Probably 10,000 men lost their lives, including those massacred in Ireland. "The Spaniards," writes an English officer, "were so miserably distressed coming to land, that one man named Melaghlin McCabbe killed eighty with his gallow glass axe."

A contemporary ballad by Thomas Deloney may also be applicable to a later day and generation. It begins as follows:

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O noble England, fall doune upon thy knee,
And praise thy God with thankfull hart, which still
maintaineth thee.

The forraine forces, that seekes thy utter spoile,
Shall then through his especiall grace be brought to
shamefull foile.

With mightie power they come unto our coast :
To over runne our countrie quite, they make their
brags and boast.

In strength of men they set their onely stay,
But we upon the Lord our God will put our trust alway.

Statesmen and politicians meddled with things they did not understand in Elizabeth's day, as in ours. Doubtless with the best intention in the world, the Privy Council asked the question, "What causes are there why the Spanish navy hath not been boarded by the queen's ships? And though some of the ships of Spain may be thought too huge to be boarded by the English, yet some of the queen's ships are thought very able to have boarded divers of the meaner ships of the Spanish navy." What the Council failed to appreciate was the fact that with superior guns and gunners, and with more manageable ships, there was no need for the old-fashioned hand-to-hand fighting. To have grappled with the Armada would have been to play the enemy's game. The time-honoured notion of many soldiers and few sailors had become obsolete in the English Navy, though not in the Spanish. Thus the *San Martin* had approximately 177 seamen and 300 soldiers, while the *Ark* had 300 seamen and 125 soldiers.

Philip fully appreciated what the Council did not. He had noted in his orders to Medina Sidonia, "You are especially to take notice that the enemy's object will be to engage at a distance, on account of the advantage which they have from their artillery and the

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offensive fireworks with which they will be provided ; and, on the other hand, the object on our side should be to close and grapple and engage hand to hand." Powder, shot, and provisions were short, and precluded further fighting after Gravelines.

How completely the rising naval power of England was feared by Philip was shown in the year following the defeat of the Armada. He forbade his treasure-ships to return from America for dread of their being captured. For seven long and dreary months Hawkins and Frobisher watched off the Azores and Canaries and failed to make a single capture.

There is no more dramatic event in British history than the last fight of the *Revenge*, Drake's old flagship. In 1591 she was the flagship of Sir Richard Grenville, Lord Thomas Howard's second-in-command on the station mentioned immediately above, and a nephew of Lord Howard of Effingham. Philip could no longer further delay his sea-borne commerce because he required the money. He therefore equipped a fleet which was to pick up the Spanish Plate Fleet in mid-ocean and convoy it home. Howard had only half a dozen ships, while Don Alonso de Bazan had over fifty.

When the commander-in-chief was watering his fleet in Flores Bay, the *Moonshine* pinnace put in with a warning from the Earl of Cumberland, then engaged in attacking commerce off the Spanish coast, to the effect that Don Alonso was approaching. The information came at the eleventh hour. Indeed, Howard had scarcely time to get outside, and in order that the men on shore might not be deserted he left the *Revenge* and a victualler to wait for them. When Sir Richard was ready to clear the Spaniards were between him and Howard. The victualler, running to leeward of



THE "REVENGE."



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the enemy, got away, and had the fiery son of Bideford liked he could have followed suit. In the peculiar etiquette of the sea such a course would have been an acknowledgment of inferiority. Despite the entreaties of some of his officers, he steadfastly negatived their counsel to run before the wind, "utterly refusing," according to Sir Walter Raleigh, "to turn from his enemies, alleging that he would rather choose to die than to dishonour himself, his country, and her Majesty's ship—persuading his company that he would pass through the two divisions of them." Like Cradock off Coronel, he played a man's game. He would "pass through two squadrons in spite of them, and enforce that of Seville to give him way." The first galleon to meet him was the *San Felipe*, which by skilful handling got to windward and took the breeze out of his sails.

The fight began at three o'clock in the afternoon and was continued throughout the night. "Fifteen naval armadas," writes Raleigh, "were brilliantly repulsed by this one English ship, which received in the course of the action eight hundred shot of great artillery, besides many assaults and entries." Twice Grenville was wounded, but refused to go below. Lord Thomas Howard did what he could to draw off some of the enemy vessels from his gallant colleague, but could do nothing to prevent his second-in-command from being surrounded. At length, his ship leaking like a sieve, her masts gone by the board, the upper deck torn away, and forty dead, Grenville ordered the master-gunner to be prepared to blow up the battered hulk with the remaining barrel of gunpowder. Then he addressed those of the crew who were still unwounded, saying that "as they had, like valiant, resolute men, repulsed so many enemies, they should

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not now shorten the honour of their nation by prolonging their own lives by a few hours or a few days. The master-gunner readily agreed, and divers others ; but the captain and the master were of another opinion, and besought Sir Richard to have care of them, alleging that the Spanish would be as ready to entertain a composition [viz. ransom] as they were willing to offer the same ; and that there being divers and sufficient valiant men yet living, and whose wounds were not mortal, they might do their country and prince acceptable service hereafter."

The master of the *Revenge* was rowed to Don Alonso de Bazan's flagship, and the Admiral agreed that the officers should be released on payment of a ransom and the crew returned to England as soon as practicable. As Grenville was borne away from his flagship he fainted, but shortly afterward recovered consciousness. "Here die I, Richard Grenville," he is stated to have muttered with his dying breath, "with a joyful heart and a quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a good soldier ought to do, who has fought for his country, queen, religion, and honour. Wherefore my soul joyfully departeth out of this body, and shall always leave behind it an everlasting fame of a true soldier, who hath done his duty as he was bound to do. But the others of my company have done as traitors and dogs, for which they shall be reproached all their lives, and leave a shameful name for ever."

Two Spanish ships had been sunk, another had to be beached, and a fourth was a wreck before the *Revenge* was abandoned. Of Philip's Spanish Plate Fleet over a hundred foundered or were wrecked in a gale which overtook them after they had been met by the convoy, forty-eight hours following the fight.

CHAPTER XI

From Commonwealth to Revolution

*Time, and the Ocean, and some fostering star
In high cabal have made us what we are.*

WILLIAM WATSON

AT Elizabeth's death in 1603, according to Monson, "the last admiral she had ever sent to sea," there were forty-one ships in the Navy, of which two were of 1,000 tons, three of 900 tons, three of 800 tons, twenty-five of from 700 tons to 100 tons, and eight under the latter figure. At the close of the reign of James I the number had been reduced to thirty-three, the largest reaching 1,400 tons and the smallest 80 tons. Merchant vessels still played their part in the service when occasion required.

The first of the Stuarts, though deeply interested in shipbuilding, was a peace-loving soul, who used the service for warring against pirates instead of against nations. Even the Navy itself had "become a ragged regiment of common rogues," according to a contemporary. Peace was made with Spain, but already the growing sea-power of Holland was causing uneasiness, though she dared not show her flag within sight of a ship of the English Navy, at least in the Narrow Seas. On one occasion Sir William Monson sighted a Dutch squadron whose commander merely dipped his colours. This was not at all to the Admiral's liking. He peremptorily ordered them not to be shown

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at all, "for rather than he would suffer him to wear his flag in view of so many nations as were to behold it, he resolved to bury himself in the sea." The result was entirely satisfactory.

Under Phineas Pett finer vessels were built, and 1610 witnessed the launching at Woolwich of the largest warship yet constructed in England. "The keel," it is recorded, "was 114 feet long, and the cross-beam forty-four in length; she is to carry sixty-four pieces of great ordnance, and is of the burthen of 1,400 tons. This royal ship is double built, and is most sumptuously adorned within and without with all manner of carving, painting, and gilding, being in all respects the greatest and goodliest ship that ever was built in England; and this glorious ship the King gave unto his son Henry Prince of Wales." This was the *Prince Royal*. The first merchant vessel of 1,200 tons, the *Trade's Increase*, was also built at the same dockyard.

Unfortunately the Navy was grossly mismanaged, the fleet was undermanned and ill provisioned, corruption was rampant, sums were paid for ships that did not exist, offices were sold, and when a commission was eventually appointed to go into the matter it found, among other disgraceful discoveries, "that neither due survey is taken of ought that cometh in, nor orderly warrant given for most that goeth out, nor any particular account made, nor now possible to be made, of any one main worke or service that is done."

The names of Pym, Hampden, and Glanville are honoured in the annals of the Empire. When Charles I issued a writ for ship-money to be paid by inland as well as by maritime counties he did so because of what

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he considered to be the urgency for a larger fleet. Hitherto shires boasting no coastline had been exempted, and these men resisted because there was no precedent as regards the more fortunate inland counties, and even the ports had not been called upon for the purpose in time of peace. It is only fair to add that however unconstitutional the King's methods may have been, the money raised was actually spent on the Navy, and that, as Admiral P. H. Colomb says, "the superior classes of ships which Charles prepared and built had a most material effect on the course of the Dutch wars. In the first war the complaints of the Dutch admirals were unceasing as to the inferiority of the Dutch ships to those of the English."¹

When the Civil War flamed up there was, of course, no trained army, but, what was vastly more important, there was a fleet, and this was secured by the Parliament. The Royalists could therefore not rely on assistance from overseas, and the command of the sea meant the command of the customs. The Navy could besiege England for its own side and bring reinforcements and stores to the Puritan forces. The Earl of Warwick was made commander-in-chief; those officers who did not throw in their lot with the Parliament promptly found their occupation gone. Not only the mariners, but nearly every seaport sided with the Roundheads. The Navy patrolled the coast of England and Ireland with a thoroughness never before attempted, hiring merchant-ships to augment the regular men-of-war. In 1643 no fewer than eighty vessels were in commission. After the first Civil War, in 1648 to be exact, a part of the fleet mutinied. The squadron in the Downs refused to be placed under the

¹ *Naval Warfare* (2nd ed., 1895), p. 31.

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command of a military man, and on his arrival boldly put him on shore. Yet it will be recollected that only a comparatively few years had passed since the soldier had invariably held that position. Although the Lord Admiral Warwick took the place of Colonel Rainsborough, the rebels refused to come to terms, and helped to secure the castles of Deal, Walmer, and Sandown for the Royalists, a short-lived triumph that Fairfax speedily wiped out. The mutineers escaped to Helvoetsluys, in Holland, where their ships were handed over to the Prince of Wales, then a refugee, and subsequently placed under the command of Lord Willoughby of Parham, who, ironically enough, was no more a sailor than the despised and disowned Rainsborough. After making a voyage to England and being neither attacked nor disposed to attack, the squadron returned to Holland. Several of the ships afterward came back to throw in their lot with Warwick, leaving only seven behind. The latter were placed under Prince Rupert.

Three weeks after the execution of the King Warwick was dismissed, and the command of the Fleet passed to three colonels, Edward Popham, Robert Blake, and Richard Deane, who became 'Admirals and Generals at Sea.' The Commonwealth certainly did not neglect the Navy at the expense of the Army. An era of vigorous shipbuilding set in under the Petts. Thus at the end of 1653 we find no fewer than 132 vessels in the service, in addition to a dozen fire-ships and victuallers. It was during this period also that the idea of dividing different classes of ships into 'rates' appears. First-rates, for instance, were from 891 to 1,556 tons, armed with from 64 to 104 guns, and carrying from 350 to 700 men. The sixth-

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rate, and the lowest, consisted of vessels of from 55 to 255 tons, mounting from 6 to 36 guns, and worked by from 25 to 130 men. Of this large number of ships only three were of the largest size, while sixty-three—almost 50 per cent.—were fourth-rates of from 301 to 700 tons, carrying 28 to 50 guns.

A much-appreciated increase in pay was granted, a fairer distribution of prize-money was arranged, rations were improved, and peculation at the dock-yards severely dealt with.

In accordance with their commission to “oppose and suppress whoever maintains the title of Charles Stuart, eldest son to the late King, or any of his issue claiming a title to the Crown,” Popham, Blake, and Deane duly set out to scour the seas. With great good fortune Rupert escaped from Helvoetsluys, after having indulged in a little profitable piracy, sailed down Channel, and duly made Kinsale, then a Royalist stronghold like Jersey and the Scilly Isles. On occasion “the Devil,” as Rupert’s sister called him, issued forth and preyed on commerce, and he also succeeded in relieving the Scilly Isles. After the loss of a ship and the appearance of a blockading squadron under Sir George Ayscue, however, there was less heart and lesser chance for such tactics, and when Ayscue was succeeded by Blake and Deane the Royalist Admiral must have recognized that his position was well nigh hopeless. Yet fortune attended him, for heavy weather compelled the vessels of the Parliament to withdraw. Rupert seized his opportunity, and abandoning his prizes, sailed for Portugal, eventually reaching Lisbon with several English vessels he had captured on the way.

At the moment English seas were clear, but such

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urgent complaints were made to the Government that the Council of State decided to fit out a winter fleet. It was put in charge of Blake, and consisted of twelve vessels, a number subsequently raised to twenty by the appearance of additional ships under Popham. "The suppressing of pirates, advantage of trade, encouraging of merchants, and securing their shipping at sea; also to pursue, seize, scatter, fight with, or destroy all the ships of the revolted fleet." Such was the main programme, which also included sundry items, such as the insistence on the lowering of the topsails of foreign ships by way of salute, and that Rupert was to be captured although he sought asylum in the harbour of a state at peace with England. The Prince and his piratical crew were to be regarded as enemies of the human race — *hostes humani generis*. Napoleon was put in the same category in 1815.

Blake's negotiations with the Portuguese Government were tedious and unsatisfactory. He would have no more of them. When the Brazil Fleet left the Tagus he promptly seized the English merchant-ships which had been hired for the purpose of reinforcing it, and secured their cargoes. King John appealed to Rupert for help. The latter made as bold a show as was possible with the small force at his command, but beyond taking his ships for an airing achieved nothing. Blake retaliated by capturing twelve ships of the incoming Plate Fleet and sinking the unlucky thirteenth.

The Tagus was no longer healthy for Rupert. Seizing his opportunity while Blake and Popham were making their way to the Spanish port of San Lucar de Barrameda to refit and get rid of the prizes, "the Devil" slipped out, captured an English merchantman sank others, and finally appeared off Cartagena and

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entered the harbour. The Admiral and General took diplomatic measures first, but was informed by the Spanish governor that it was a neutral port, and that "they had the right to protect all ships that came into their dominions; that if the Admiral were forced in thither, he should find the same security." Blake was not "forced in thither," but boldly sank, captured, or drove ashore all the vessels with the exception of Rupert's ship and another, which had sailed for Toulon owing to a storm. Blake exacted a heavy toll of French prizes for this accommodation, and when he returned to England his successor William Penn continued the work. After a roving and highly adventurous career Rupert reached Nantes. With the accidental burning of his sole remaining ship his squadron disappeared.

Blake was next employed in assisting in the reduction of the Scilly Isles. This successfully accomplished, he was appointed to the squadron in the Downs, and subsequently helped to capture Jersey. In the same year, 1651, Sir George Ayscue set out with a squadron to reduce Barbados, which surrendered during the following year. Virginia also threw in her lot with the Commonwealth.

It would have been surprising if the Navigation Act had failed to stir up bad blood with the Dutch, who had become the ocean carriers of the world. No cargoes could be imported from America, Asia, or Africa in other than English vessels, and no goods from any European country could be brought over except in English ships or those of the country producing the goods. The right of search was also retained, and an enemy's goods could be seized even when carried in neutral vessels.

The refusal of Tromp to salute the Commonwealth

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flag in the Narrow Seas brought about the First Dutch War of 1652-4. "The English," said the Dutch ambassador, "are about to attack a mountain of gold ; we are about to attack a mountain of iron." On May 19, 1652, Blake saw Tromp with some forty sail off Dover. "Being come within three leagues of them," writes the former, "they weighed and stood by a wind to the eastward, we supposing their intention was to leave us to avoid the dispute of the flag. About two hours after they altered their course and bore directly with us, Van Tromp the headmost ; whereupon we lay and put ourselves into a fighting posture, judging they had a resolution to engage. Being come within musket-shot I gave order to fire at his flag, which was done thrice. After the third shot he let fly a broadside at us."

The battle lasted for five hours, Blake in the fifty-gun ship the *James* bearing the brunt of it. The night was spent in refitting, the rigging and sails being "extremely shattered." On the following morning "we espied the Dutch fleet about four leagues distance from ours towards the coast of France, and by advice of a Council of War it was resolved to ply to windward to keep the weather-gauge, and we are now ready to let fall our anchor this tide. What course the Dutch fleet steers we do not well know, nor can we tell what harm we have done them, but we suppose one of them to be sunk, and another of thirty guns we have taken, with the captains of both. . . . We have six men of ours slain, and nine or ten men desperately wounded, and twenty-five more not without danger. . . . We have received above seventy great shot in our hull and masts, in our sails and rigging without number, being engaged with the whole body of the fleet for the

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space of four hours, and the mark at which they aimed. We must needs acknowledge a great mercy that we had no more harm, and our hope the righteous God will continue the same unto us if there do arise a war between us, they being first in the breach, and seeking an occasion to quarrel and watching, as it seems, an advantage to brave us upon our own coast, etc."

The battle was not renewed, and the vessel which Blake presumed to have sunk was abandoned by Captain Lawson and recovered by the Dutch.

The convoy system of gathering together a group of merchantmen and conducting them through a danger zone which obtained during the World War was merely the revival of a venerable institution. Its modern application met with considerably greater success than was often evident in the past. The First Dutch War consisted very largely, so far as England was concerned, of attacks on convoys. The necessity for protecting them was responsible for four of the seven battles fought.

The quarrel, brought to a head by the fight off Dover, began by Blake's being sent north to take or sink the enemy's extensive herring-fleet, which was guarded by warships. Off Buchan Ness the erstwhile officer of militia captured about a hundred of the herring-busses, in addition to making prizes of a dozen frigates. On August 16, 1652, De Ruyter's fleet, convoying sixty merchant vessels, fell in with Sir George Ayscue's squadron. Although both sides claimed the victory, the Dutchman was able to detach two of his ships to escort the traders. They got safely away. Meanwhile Blake and Penn were busy capturing Dutch homeward-bound vessels to the number of seventeen.

While Blake was victorious over De Witt in the battle

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off the Kentish Knock, this did not prevent Martin Tromp setting off with seventy-three ships to guard a convoy of 300 merchantmen. Meeting Blake, who had only thirty-seven sail, he defeated him, and the traders went on their way rejoicing. The Dutch admiral then picked up 250 vessels awaiting convoy up Channel. The General and Admiral, greatly reinforced, met him off Portland. The English are said to have taken forty ships of the convoy and four warships. In addition, three were sunk, and one was blown up. The victors destroyed one of their own vessels to prevent her being captured.

Once again the intrepid Tromp eluded his enemy and convoyed 200 ships to the north of Scotland without being molested. In addition, 300 homeward-bound vessels arrived safely in the Texel. Notwithstanding the wonderful escapes of the merchantmen, during the war of twenty-two months the English claimed to have captured 1,700 vessels, valued at £6,000,000.

Cromwell's naval legacy to Charles II was 154 ships, including prizes, with a total tonnage of 57,463. To save expense, resort was had to coast fortifications. "All their care," as Mr Secretary Pepys notes, "they now take is to fortify themselves, and are not ashamed of it." In the Second Dutch War, which began in 1665 and ended in 1667, the enemy adopted an entirely different policy. Moreover, they were helped by a French fleet. Believing that it was impossible to fight and protect commerce at the same time, the Dutch prohibited sea-borne trade, excluding homeward-bound ships. Off Lowestoft and the North Foreland the Dutch were worsted; in the Four Days' Battle in the Straits of Dover the English were compelled to retire with

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THE "ROYAL CHARLES"



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the loss of a score of ships. De Ruyter disgraced us by holding possession of the mouth of the Thames for a few days, but in the end the Dutch learned, as De Witt had remarked, that "Englishmen might be killed, and English ships burnt, but the English courage was invincible." When peace came each side retained what it had won, but England had scored heavily in another direction. In 1668 it was estimated by Sir James Child that English merchant shipping had doubled in two years.

At the conclusion of the Third Dutch War, in which we were helped by France, and despite De Ruyter's victories at Solebay and off the Texel, it was evident that the sailors of Holland were no longer "the wagoners of all seas."

To sum up this brief survey, the Dutch Wars emphasize the importance of maritime trade, even when the country concerned is not an island; indicate the means used in a great naval conflict to maintain commerce carried by ships and its complete breakdown; and show the failure of an attempt to make Land-Power do the work of Sea-Power. It is interesting to note that it was during the Second Dutch War that the line-of-battle was first adopted in naval warfare. Blake, at heart a soldier, enforced a method which won the unqualified praise of Clarendon, although he was a political enemy. The Earl tells us that Blake "was the first man who declined the old track . . . and despised those rules which had long been in practice, to keep his ship and his men out of danger, which had been held in former times a point of great ability and circumspection; as if the principal art requisite in the captain of a ship had been to be sure to come home safe again."

CHAPTER XII

When Dutch William Reigned

Take it all in all, a Ship of the Line is the most honourable thing that man, as a gregarious animal, has ever produced.

RUSKIN

IT is one of the many ironies of history that James II, who had been Lord High Admiral and taken part in the naval war against the Dutch, did much to restore the fleet which was the main instrument in the loss of his throne. In the autumn of 1688 it consisted of 173 vessels, of which ninety-two were in commission. After many warnings, the King at last realized that invasion was contemplated. A squadron under Sir Roger Strickland was therefore detailed to watch the movements of the Dutch fleet, but the Admiral was too weak as a commander and too strong as a proselytizer of the Roman Catholic religion. When the sailors of the sparsely manned ships were on the verge of mutiny the force was greatly augmented and placed under Lord Dartmouth. It was evident, however, that many of the officers were also disaffected and ripe for a change, and on November 5, 1688, the Prince of Orange landed at Brixham without opposition. He had set sail from Helvoetsluys when Dartmouth was lying off the coast of Essex. An attempt was made to follow, but it was so faint-hearted that on the day the King's son-in-law reached Torbay the English squadron was no nearer than Beachy Head. Not inappropriately Arthur Herbert,

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who had been dismissed from his position of Rear-Admiral of England, commanded the Deliverer's fleet as Lieutenant Admiral General. Our constitutional monarchy dates from the time of William III, who became the exemplar of the famous doctrine of the balance of power in Europe.

When the French Navy, fostered by Richelieu and Colbert, entered into rivalry on the seas, it was against Spain that its efforts were chiefly directed. In 1689 France was the third naval Power in Europe, and when hostilities broke out in that year folk were not wanting who prophesied that the struggle would be both long and bitter. In the first move of the war-game at sea the forces of Louis XIV were successful. James had already landed at Kinsale, and Herbert was too late to preclude the disembarking of reinforcements from a second squadron which had followed in the wake of the other shortly afterward. A long-distance battle was fought, during the course of which an enemy vessel was set on fire, but otherwise Herbert signally failed, and allowed Châteaurenault to return to Bantry Bay, from whence he sailed for Brest after troops and stores had been landed from the transports. For this minor action Herbert was created Earl of Torrington.

Encouraged by the ease with which James II had crossed and secured a foothold in Ireland, and the undoubted success of the second expedition, Louis XIV set about making elaborate preparations for invasion. Holland, no longer an enemy, sent a squadron of eighteen ships to help England, which on the approach of the French admiral Tourville with over seventy fighting ships had only thirty-two vessels immediately available. Torrington, who was in command, was taken by surprise. Unpreparedness in naval matters had led to

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his resignation from the Board of Admiralty, "that since I could not prevent the mischief I might have no share in the blame." Although notoriously lacking in energy, hence his nickname of 'Lord Tarry-in-Town,' he at least had the courage of his convictions in the matter of what he considered to be an adequate service.

Knowing that the major part of the Army was in Ireland with William, and looking forward to an immediate insurrection in behalf of the exiled King, Tourville sailed for the Isle of Wight and dropped anchor in Freshwater Bay. The allied fleet, then lying at St Helen's, weighed and dropped down to Dunnose. "We sailed this morning," Torrington writes on June 23, 1690, to the Earl of Nottingham, "but the wind taking us short we are not far from Donose. If the French have continued their station, we are not above five leagues asunder. Our fleet consists of 50 men-of-war, and 20 fire-ships; the odds are great, and you know it is not my fault. To-morrow will probably be the deciding day. Let them tremble at the consequence whose fault it was the fleet is no stronger; for my part, I will, with God Almighty's help, do my duty, and I hope everybody here will do so too. If we are to expect any more Dutch, I hope they will be hastened to us; it is not impossible they may come time enough for a share, because the sea is subject to accidents. We have as yet but 18 Dutch with us, after all De Witt's great promises."

The reinforcements earnestly hoped for by Torrington arrived next day in the shape of three Dutch and two English ships. He started off early on the 25th, but was compelled to anchor owing to a thick sea-fog, which eventually lifted, and he bore down upon the enemy. On getting closer he came to the conclusion that it

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would be rash to seek an engagement, and this made him "very heartily give God thanks they declined the battle." At a council of war it was unanimously decided "to shun fighting with them, especially if they have the wind of us." Torrington's opinion was that the disparity between the forces was too great to hope for victory, and that if he fought he endangered "the losing of the fleet" and the quiet of the country; "for if we are beaten, they being absolute masters of the sea, will be at great liberty of doing many things they dare not attempt whilst we observe them, and are in a possibility of joining Vice-Admiral Killigrew and our ships to the westward." Killigrew, it should be mentioned, was returning from the Mediterranean, and did not reach Plymouth until several days after Torrington had dispatched the letter from which the above quotations are made. Sir Cloudesley Shovel was ploughing his way through the Irish Sea to reinforce the commander-in-chief, but had not yet done so. As a last resort Torrington informed Nottingham that he would retire to the Gunfleet, north of the Thames, "the only place we can with any manner of probability make our party good with them [*i.e.* the enemy] in the condition we are in."

This latter alternative was negatived by Nottingham. Rather than do it Torrington was to give battle, but he could go to the westward to secure a junction with his reinforcements, provided he did not "lose sight of the French fleet" or allow it to "get away without fighting." In his reply Torrington reiterated his conception of Sea-Power. "For whilst we observe the French, they cannot make any attempt either upon ships or shore, without running a great hazard; and if we are beaten, all is exposed to their mercy."

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A precisely similar idea seems to have obtained with Viscount Jellicoe at the battle of Jutland. "Although the battle squadrons of the Grand Fleet have only once for a few precious minutes engaged German ships; although all opportunity of decisive battle has been denied them, yet they have from the beginning enjoyed all the fruits of a complete victory. If Germany had never built a Dreadnought, or if all German Dreadnoughts had been sunk, the control and authority of the British Navy could not have been more effective. There has been no Trafalgar, but the full consequences of a Trafalgar have been continuously operative. . . . Without a battle we have all that the most victorious of battles could give us." Thus wrote the Right Hon. Winston Churchill toward the end of 1916, after he had ceased to be First Lord of the Admiralty. It is a repetition of Torrington's creed, though not that of Drake, Blake, or Nelson.

In personal command of the centre (Red), with Sir Ralph Delaval in the rear (Blue), and the Dutch under Cullemburg in the van, Torrington began the battle of Beachy Head on June 30th. Delaval showed considerable spirit, but the Dutch squadron received most of the French fire because it got into close action, while the commander-in-chief, though he did not exactly display masterly inactivity, is deemed by many modern historians to have shown sound strategy in losing the battle. One badly damaged Dutch ship was captured. Torrington, after waiting for the turn of the tide, made eastward, but Tourville's pursuit lacked energy, and the English admiral got away. In order to do so Torrington was compelled to abandon an English ship and four Dutch vessels, first taking the precaution to set them on fire.

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After burning Teignmouth the French fleet returned to Brest.

Torrington was court-martialled. "I have always said," he remarked, "that whilst we had a fleet in being, they would not dare to make an attempt" at invasion. This was the tenor of his defence, and despite much adverse criticism he won the day. Although acquitted, his commission was cancelled by William.

By the spring of 1692 Louis had prepared another expedition. This time the English were ready in very truth, for whereas the Sun King had only thirty-eight sail-of-the-line armed with 2,712 guns and seven fire-ships immediately available, Admiral Edward Russell had sixty-three sail-of-the-line, while the Dutch squadron under Allemonde had thirty-six, making a total of ninety-nine men-of-war, in addition to over a dozen frigates and fire-ships, the whole force mounting nearly 7,000 guns.

While the allied fleet was making in the direction of Cape Barfleur in thick weather it suddenly came across Tourville's forces heading for England. The French admiral's orders were to convoy the army of invasion if the coast was clear of the enemy, but if not to fight them and return for the transports when victory had attended his efforts. The battle lasted for seven hours, Tourville boldly attacking the centre, but no detailed description is possible, for Russell admitted that he could give "no particular account of things; but the French were beaten. . . ." While the French ships were slowly retreating Cloudesley Shovel broke through, but the dense fog and lack of wind prevented him from exacting a heavy toll. During the night both fleets anchored. In the morning the

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enemy drifted away in the mist, the English following them with what speed they could. Three badly damaged French ships were run ashore to escape capture, one of them being the *Soleil Royal* of 104 guns, Tourville's flagship, though he transferred his flag to another vessel before she was abandoned. All were burned by the English. A little later the fire-ships accounted for seven more. Rooke, who took part in the destruction of some of these vessels, was knighted for his gallantry.

For a time France was mainly represented at sea by privateers, though in 1693 Rooke with the Smyrna convoy of some 400 vessels was surprised by Tourville with a fleet of no fewer than eighty-six ships. As the English admiral had only twenty-three sail-of-the-line it is creditable that he was able to shield any of the merchantmen in his charge. Fortunately Tourville did not take full advantage of his enemy's weakness, and Rooke managed to save a goodly number, although nearly eighty vessels of various kinds were captured or destroyed. This severe lesson had one good effect in that it restored the position of Commander-in-Chief, which had been put in commission by Shovel, Killigrew, and Delaval, an impracticable theory of command which was tried and failed during the Great War of 1914-18 when the Allied War Council was created.

England now reverted to combined naval and military attacks on French territory, though she showed herself ready to meet a French plan of invasion, contemplated but never realized, in 1695. Benbow attacked St Malo in the year of Rooke's disaster and failed. A few months later Brest was attacked by land and sea, and Dieppe and Havre were bombarded. Other towns were subjected to similar treatment, until in 1697 the Peace of Ryswick brought a cessation of hostilities.

CHAPTER XIII

Boom-breaking at Vigo

*The Navy is the first, second, third, fourth, ad infinitum
line of defence.* FISHER

ENGLAND had now taken up a position in the Mediterranean from which she did not withdraw until the nineteenth century, and she was in command of the Channel. The death of James II in 1701 and the recognition of his son—the ‘Old Pretender’—as King of England by Louis XIV, after his acknowledgment of William, was one of many contributing causes of the War of the Spanish Succession. It brought England in sharp conflict with France, Spain, and Bavaria, and caused the formation of a Grand Alliance consisting of England, Holland, the Empire, Austria, Prussia, and Hanover. If William was the soul of the coalition, Marlborough was the heart. The former died two months before the Peace of Ryswick was shattered. War broke out on May 4, 1702, and an attack on Cadiz was decided on, Rooke commanding the fleet of thirty English and twenty Dutch sail-of-the-line, with the Duke of Ormonde as military commander. The place was bombarded, and Port St Mary plundered, but little else was done beside alienating the supporters of the Archduke Charles, whose claims to the Spanish throne were recognized by England. If Bishop Burnet is to be relied upon, the Admiral “spoke so coldly of the design

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he went upon, before he sailed, that those who conversed with him were apt to infer that he meant to do the enemy as little harm as possible." Whatever truth there may or may not be in this assertion, the separate councils of war held by the two services were certainly not conducive to frankness and goodwill. In the end the soldiers were re-embarked, and the expedition abandoned.

The return voyage was more fruitful of practical results. Having detached several ships to Algarve to get water, the captain in charge brought back a communication from the ambassador at Lisbon to the effect that twenty-two galleons richly laden with treasure from the West Indies had put in at Vigo, convoyed by thirty sail-of-the-line under Châteaurenault. Here was a job evidently more to the liking of all parties in the fleet, for the attack was carried out with boldness and vigour.

"The Duke of Ormonde," Burnet tells us, "landed with a body of the army, and attacked the forts with great bravery, while the ships broke the boom and forced the port." Here it should be interpolated that Rooke shifted his flag into a third-rate for the purpose, an example followed by other commanders. "When the French saw what was done, they left their ships, and set some of the men-of-war and some of the galleons on fire. Our men came up with such diligence that they stopped the progress of the fire; yet fifteen men-of-war and eight galleons were burnt or sunk; but our men were in time to save five men-of-war and five galleons, which they took. Here was a great destruction made, and a great booty taken, with very little loss on our side. One of our ships was set on fire by a fire-ship, but she too was saved, though with the

Boom-breaking at Vigo

loss of some men, which was all the loss we sustained in this important action. The Duke of Ormonde marched into the country and took some forts, and the town of Ritondella, where much plunder was found. The French seamen and soldiers escaped, for we, having no horses, were not in a condition to pursue them. A great deal of the treasure taken at Vigo was embezzled, and fell into private hands. One of the galleons foundered at sea. The public was not much enriched by this extraordinary capture, yet the loss our enemies made by it was a vast one ; and, to complete the ruin of the Spanish merchants, their king seized on the plate that was taken out of the ships upon their first arrival at Vigo. Thus the campaign ended—very happily for the allies, and most gloriously for the Queen, whose first year, being such a continued course of success, gave a hopeful presage of what might be hereafter expected.”

In breaking the boom the *Torbay*, commanded by Vice-Admiral Hopson, was severely injured. She “was clapt on board by a French fire-ship,” writes an eye-witness, “and had been burnt had not the latter fortunately blown up ; yet the former received much damage by it, and lost in the action, being killed and wounded, upwards of 100 men, the other ships’ loss being inconsiderable. And our loss on shore was two officers killed and four wounded, and about forty private men killed and as many wounded. Our enemy’s loss was not inferior to ours, and amongst theirs the governor of the fort was killed. This glorious victory was obtained in about two hours’ time.

“So the same night we marched about three miles farther, where we lay on our arms all night, though very wet, etc., and the ships and galleons on fire saluted

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us with several shot when burnt down to the lower tier. And when they blew up, 'twas (tho' dismal) inexpressible fine. The next morning we marched to Redondela, from whence the inhabitants were fled; yet great bodies grew together on the mountains, but finding us in so good a posture to receive them, they would not attack us. Also about this place we took many prisoners, etc., but had none taken and killed of ours."

Rooke on his return to England took his seat in the Commons as member for Portsmouth and was made a privy councillor. The thanks of both Houses were voted to him and Ormonde, as well as to the services. Sir George responded in two sentences, one of which is particularly deserving of remembrance. "Sir," he said, "no man hath the command of fortune, but every man hath virtue at his will; and though I may not always be successful in my country's service as upon this expedition, yet I may presume to assure you, I shall never be the more faulty."

Rooke brought over the Archduke Charles from Holland to England in 1703, and sailed for Lisbon with him in the new year. Having landed the claimant to the Spanish throne, Rooke proceeded to bombard Barcelona. The result was disappointing, and the fleet was therefore headed in the direction of Nice with the idea of assisting the Duke of Savoy. On the way the Brest Fleet under the Count of Toulouse was sighted steering for Toulon to effect a junction with the ships there. Rooke followed for a while, but soon returned down the Mediterranean, where he was met by Shovel. They first attacked and captured Gibraltar, and then sailed for Tetuan to obtain water and other stores. Off Malaga the French fleet was sighted. Fighting began

Boom-breaking at Vigo

on August 13, 1704, with Shovel's advanced squadron attacking the advanced squadron of the Marquis de Villette. "Our number of ships," Sir Cloudesley notes in his dispatch, "that fought in the line of battle were pretty equal. I think they were forty-nine and we fifty-three; but Sir George Rooke reserved some of the fifty-gun ships to observe if they attempted anything with their galleys, of which they have twenty-four. Their ships did exceed in bigness. I judge they had seventeen three-deck ships, and we had but seven. The battle began on Sunday, the 13th, soon after ten in the morning, and in the centre and rear of the fleet it continued till night parted. In the van of the fleet, where I commanded, and led with Sir John Leake, we, having the weather-gage, had an opportunity of coming as near as we pleased, which was within pistol-shot, before firing a gun; through which means and God's assistance the enemy declined us, and were upon the run in less than four hours, by which time we had too little wind, so that their galleys towed off their lame ships and others as they pleased; for the Admirals of the White and Blue, with whom we fought, had seven galleys attending upon them.

"As soon as the enemy got out of reach of our guns," he adds, "the battle continuing pretty hot astern, and some of our ships in the Admiral's squadron towing out of the line, which I understood afterwards was for want of shot, I ordered all the ships of my division to slack all their sails, to close the line in the centre. This working had that good effect that several of the enemy's ships astern, which had kept their line, having their topsails and foresails set, shot up abreast of us; but they were so warmly received before they got abroadside that, with their boats ahead, and their

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sprit sails set, they towed from us without giving us the opportunity of firing at them. The ships of my squadron escaped pretty well, and I the best of all, though I never took greater pains in all my life to be soundly beaten, for I set all my sails and rowed with three boats ahead to get alongside with the Admiral of the White and Blue ; but he, outsailing me, shunned fighting, and lay alongside of the little ships. Notwithstanding, the engagement was very sharp, and, I think, the like between two fleets never has been seen. There is hardly a ship that must not shift one mast, and some all. In my belief there are not three spare top-masts nor three fishes in the fleet, nor above ten jury-masts to set up."

Seeing that Shovel was likely to be surrounded, Rooke had boldly engaged Toulouse's flagship the *Foudroyant*, while Cullemburg, the Dutch admiral, attacked the enemy centre. When the battle had died down it was seen that the flagships of de Villette and Belle Isle were blazing, but eventually the crews managed to get the flames under control. Fire also broke out in five other French ships. No vessels were captured or sunk in either fleet. Over 2,700 casualties were sustained by the allies, while the French admitted the loss of no fewer than 200 officers. Although the English and Dutch gave chase, Toulouse crowded on all sail and escaped to Toulon.

It was a notable day, for while Rooke and his colleagues were hammering the enemy at sea, Marlborough was winning the battle of Blenheim. Not again during the war did the French Navy venture on a big undertaking. The corsairs alone showed enterprise.

CHAPTER XIV

A Century of Empire

It is upon the Navy that, under the providence of God, the wealth, prosperity, and the peace of these islands and of the Empire do mainly depend.

ARTICLES OF WAR

IT is a widely accepted maxim that "trade follows the flag." That civilization follows commerce is perhaps less fully appreciated. The British Empire is a case in point. It has been built up by colonization rather than by conquest. Indeed, the former word is a term which originally meant trade rather than government, though not in a purely lexicographical sense.

The seventeenth was a century of great overseas expansion, of the sowing of the seeds of Imperialism that were to flower later. The East India Company undertook its first voyage in 1601 ; in 1612 it established a post at Surat, Madras was purchased in 1639, Bombay acquired in 1661, Fort St David built in 1690, and Calcutta founded in 1696. The Eastland, Muscovy, Turkey, and Levant companies were growing in efficiency and power. "Not yearly but monthly, nay, almost weekly," wrote Lewis Roberts in 1638 of the Turkey Company, "their ships are observed to go to and fro, exporting hence the cloths of Suffolk, Gloucester, Worcester, and Coventry, dyed and dressed, kerseys of Hampshire and Yorkshire, lead, tin, and a great quantity of Indian spices, indigo, and calicoes ;

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and in return thereof they import from Turkey the raw silks of Persia, Damascus, and Tripoli; cottons and cotton yarn of Cyprus and Smyrna, and sometimes the gems of India, the drugs of Egypt and Arabia, the muscatels of Candia, and the currants and oils of Zante, Cephalonia, and Morea."

The Empire was not founded by the Navy, though without the senior service its links could never have been welded together. No monarch commissioned a squadron and ordered its commander to plant the flag of old England on new territory, albeit the idea was conceived in the minds of two mariners, those gallant and adventurous half-brothers Walter Raleigh and Humphrey Gilbert. When Spain was mistress of the seas Raleigh made five attempts to found a colony on the North American continent, called Virginia in honour of the Virgin Queen. He failed, but the idea was not relegated to the limbo of impracticable ideals. When Raleigh was eating his heart out in the Tower and employing his time by writing a history of the world, the South Virginia Company and the Company of Plymouth Adventurers were formed. Both received charters in 1606, the former to colonize the territory between the thirty-fourth and forty-first degrees of north latitude, and the second that between the forty-first and forty-fifth degrees. In the following year the London or South Virginia Company founded Jamestown, not far from the mouth of the Chesapeake. Gradually a system of self-government was developed, the House of Burgesses making laws and controlling internal taxation; Westminster interfered only in the interests of home trade. The success of the Plymouth Adventurers on the Kennebec River was less marked, but in 1620 the Pilgrim Fathers landed in Massa-

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chusetts, and settlements began to develop rapidly. In order to organize for their common defence the United Colonies of New England came into being in 1643, and included Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and Newhaven. Baltimore was established in 1634, Rhode Island in 1636, Carolina in 1663, and in 1664 the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam was captured and renamed New York. In 1670 the Hudson Bay Company received its charter, and twelve years later the Quaker settlements of West Jersey and Pennsylvania were founded. When William of Orange came to the throne the whole of the coast between Florida and Acadia (Maine) was occupied by English settlers.

In other parts of the world Barbados had been nominally occupied in 1605, the Bermudas settled in 1609 through Sir George Somers being wrecked on one of them, St Kitts and the Leeward Islands in 1623, British Honduras in 1630, the Windward Islands in 1638, the Bahamas in 1646. Jamaica was conquered in 1655, and the Virgin Islands in 1672.

During the War of the Spanish Succession the West Indies loomed large, for both the English and the enemy had important possessions there. 'Honest Benbow,' who had only recently returned from the colonies with a bad report as to their condition, was again sent out. King William hesitated at the choice on account of the treacherous nature of the climate, but when the Admiral was consulted he merely retorted that no sailor had a right to choose either his duty or his station. This highly delighted the monarch, who had more than a sneaking regard for the bluff old seaman. Almost the only joke attributed to the scion of the house of Orange was made in connexion with Benbow.

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Previous to the latter's voyage to the West Indies in 1698 the question of command was brought up before him. Another admiral was mentioned, who was said to be too much of a fine gentleman. "Oh!" said the King, "if we are to have a *beau*, I insist upon my old friend Ben-bow."

The immediate object of the expedition of 1701 was to endeavour to persuade the Spanish colonies to throw in their lot with the Archduke Charles. Should the admiral fail in this he was to raid their commerce. On arriving at Barbados Benbow found that the French had forestalled him, and that so far as the number of ships was concerned he was considerably weaker. Moreover they had with them a formidable body of soldiers.

On July 19th Benbow sighted ten vessels under M. du Casse, but was unable to reach them. The flagship and the *Ruby* (forty-eight guns) continued to give chase the following day, the other vessels lagging behind. Subsequent happenings are thus related in the following extract from the journal of one of the officers of the *Breda*, the Admiral's flagship:

"On the 21st, at daylight, the admiral being on the quarter of the second ship of the enemy's squadron, and within point-blank shot, the *Ruby* being ahead of him, the French ship fired at the *Ruby*, which the *Ruby* returned. The two French ships which were ahead fell off, and there being little wind brought their guns to bear on the *Ruby*. The *Breda* brought her guns to bear on the French ship, which first began, and shattered her very much, obliging her to tow away; but the *Ruby* was likewise so much shattered in her masts, sails, and rigging, that the admiral was obliged to lay by her, and send boats to tow her off. The action

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continued almost two hours ; during which the rear ship of the enemy was abreast of the *Defiance* and *Windsor*, who never fired one gun, though within point-blank shot. At eight o'clock in the morning, a gale of wind springing up, the enemy made what sail they could ; and the admiral chased them in hopes of coming up with them. Being then abreast of the river Grande, at two in the afternoon, the admiral got abreast of two of the sternmost of the enemy's ships ; and, in hopes to disable them in their masts and rigging, began to fire on them, as did some of the ships astern ; but he laying abreast of them they pointed wholly at him, which galled the ship much in her rigging, and dismounted two or three of her lower deck guns. This lasted about two hours. They then got within gun-shot, the admiral making what sail he could after them, and they using all the shifts they possibly could to avoid fighting.

" On the 22nd, at daylight, the *Greenwich* was about three leagues astern, though the signal for the line of battle was never struck night or day ; the rest of the ships indifferently near (except the *Ruby*) ; and the enemy about a mile and a half ahead. At three in the afternoon the wind, which before was easterly, came to the southward. This gave the enemy the weather-gauge ; but in tacking the admiral fetched within gunshot of the sternmost of them, firing at each other ; but our line being much out of order, and some of our ships three miles astern, nothing could be done. This night the enemy were very uneasy, altering their courses often between the west and north.

" On the 23rd, at daylight, the enemy was about six miles ahead of us ; and the great Dutch ship separated from them, out of sight. Some of our squadron,

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at this time, were more than four miles astern, viz. the *Defiance* and *Windsor*. At ten o'clock the enemy tacked, the wind being then at E.N.E. but very variable. The admiral fetched within point-blank shot of two of them, firing broadsides at each other. Soon after, he tacked and pursued them as well as he could. After noon we took from them a small English ship called the *Ann*, galley, which they had taken off Lisbon. The *Ruby* being disabled, the admiral ordered her for Port Royal. At eight this night our squadron was about two miles distant from the enemy, they steering S.E. and very little wind, then at N.W. and variable, the admiral standing after them, and all his ships, except the *Falmouth*, falling much astern. At twelve the enemy began to separate.

“ On the 24th, at two in the morning, we came up within hail of the sternmost. It being very little wind, the admiral fired a broadside with double and round below, and round and partridge aloft, which she returned. At three o'clock the admiral's right leg was shattered to pieces by a chain shot, and he was carried below ; but presently ordered his cradle on the quarter deck, and continued the fight till day, when one of the enemy's ships of about 70 guns appeared in a very disabled condition ; her main-yard down and shot to pieces, her foretop - sail yard shot away, her mizen-mast shot by the board, all her rigging gone, and her sides bored through and through with our double-headed shot. The *Falmouth* assisted in this matter very much, and no other ship. Soon after day the admiral saw the other ships of the enemy coming towards him with a strong gale easterly ; at the same time the *Windsor*, *Pendennis*, and *Greenwich*, ahead of the enemy, ran to leeward of the disabled ship, fired their

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broadsides, passed her, and stood to the southward ; then the *Defiance* followed them, passed also to leeward of the disabled ship, and fired part of her broadside. The disabled ship did not fire above twenty guns at the *Defiance*, before she put her helm a-weather, and ran away right before the wind, lowered both her top-sails, and ran to leeward of the *Falmouth* (which was then a gun-shot to leeward of the admiral, knotting her rigging) without any regard to the signal for battle. The enemy seeing our other two ships stand to the southward, expected they would have tacked and stood with them. They brought-to with their heads to the northward ; but seeing those ships did not tack, bore down upon the admiral, and ran between the disabled ship and him, firing all their guns ; by which they shot away his main top-sail yard, and shattered his rigging much. None of the other ships being near him, nor taking notice of the battle signal, the captain of the *Breda* ordered two guns to be fired at the ships ahead, in order to put them in mind of their duty. The French seeing this disorder of the English squadron, brought to, lay by their own disabled ship, and remanned and took her in tow. The *Breda's* rigging being much shattered, she lay by till ten o'clock ; and being then refitted, the admiral ordered the captain to pursue the enemy, who were then about three miles distant, and to leeward, having the disabled ship in tow, and steering N.E., the wind at S.S.W. The admiral in the meantime made all the sail after them he could, and the battle signal was always out. But the enemy taking encouragement from the behaviour of some of our captains, the admiral ordered Captain Fogg to send to the captains to keep their line, and behave themselves like men, which he did. Upon this Captain Kirby came

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on board the admiral, and pressed him very earnestly to desist from any farther engagement, which made the admiral desirous to know the opinion of the other captains. Accordingly he ordered Captain Fogg to make the signal for all the captains to come on board, which they did, and most of them concurred with Captain Kirby in opinion that they had better desist from engaging. Upon this the admiral perceiving they had no mind to fight, and not being able to prevail on them to come to any other resolution, though all they said was erroneous, he thought it not fit to venture any farther. At this time the admiral was abreast of the enemy, and had a fair opportunity of fighting them; the masts and yards in a good condition, and few men killed, except those on board the *Breda*."

When an officer expressed sympathy with Benbow at his wound the patient exclaimed, "I am sorry for it too, but I would rather have lost both my legs than have seen this dishonour brought upon the English nation; and hear me, should another shot deprive me of life, behave like men, and fight it out whilst the ship can swim."

It may be wondered why a minor action, or rather a series of actions, should be detailed at greater length than some of the famous victories of the Navy. Clio knows no favourites, and it is well to remember that there have been incidents—fortunately exceedingly rare—where the honour of the senior service has not been upheld. At the subsequent court-martial four of the captains in Benbow's squadron were tried for cowardice, breach of orders, and neglect of duty. Two were condemned to death and shot, one died previous to the charges being heard, and the remaining officer was dismissed. The Admiral survived the shock

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of having his leg amputated, but a fever followed, and he died on November 4, 1702.

By the Peace of Utrecht (1713) England, the prime mover in the war, obtained Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, the Hudson Bay Territory, Gibraltar, and Minorca, and received from Spain the right to send one ship a year to Porto Bello and the monopoly of the slave-traffic with Spanish America.

CHAPTER XV

Anson Goes Round the World

Historical facts can never be demonstrated with a completeness of proof which can leave no room for doubt. FROUDE

THE English are not the only nation who have borrowed the Hebraic prerogative of regarding themselves as God's chosen people. In 1739 the Government was informed by Sir Benjamin Keene, ambassador at Madrid, that Spain "is at present governed by three or four mean stubborn people of little minds and limited understandings but full of the Romantick Ideas they have found in old Memorials and Speculative authors who have treated of the immense Grandeur of the Spanish Monarchy, People who have vanity enough to think themselves reserved by Providence to rectify and reform the mistakes and abuses of past ministers and ages."

The origin of the War of Jenkins' Ear, which began in the year of Keene's analysis of the psychology of the few ministers who had any influence with Queen Elizabeth Farnese, was something more than an ear in a bottle. The celebrated incident associated with John Jenkins, master of a Glasgow trader, and his declaration to a committee of the House of Commons "that he had recommended his soul to God, and his cause to his country," were the final dramatic touches to a series of events leading to a war which Walpole had almost succeeded in averting. The *asiento*, or

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contract for the supply of slaves, and the right to send a trading-ship to the Spanish Main, encouraged a considerable amount of illicit commerce with the Spanish colonies, and the South Sea Company was no exception. Both sides complained of outrages, the Spaniards claiming that they had a right to search English ships on the high seas; the English asserting that they had no such right, and that coastguards and others committed unpardonable brutalities. Diplomatic and other pressure was brought to bear on the Court of Madrid. Letters of reprisal were threatened, and the 'mailed fist' was in evidence in the appearance in the Mediterranean of a squadron of nine ships and two fire-ships. A few months later Spain agreed to pay England £95,000 and Admiral Haddock was told to withdraw—which he did not do because the order was revoked. Spain, which had disarmed her fleet as a guarantee of good faith, considered herself duped, and refused to pay the agreed compensation. The South Sea Company, debtor to Philip V to the extent of £68,000, and swearing it had lost three times that amount through the action of the *garda costas*, likewise repudiated its debts in this matter.

Popular clamour brought about the War of Jenkins' Ear. Newcastle bowed to Parliament and to public opinion; Walpole ate his own words, apparently because he was afraid of France making common cause with Spain. War was declared on October 19, 1739, and while the crowd rejoiced greatly, Walpole exclaimed both truthfully and oratorically, "They may ring the bells now, but they will soon be wringing their hands." As Mr Harold W. V. Temperley, one of the youngest and ablest of modern historians, has written, "The first act of an eighty years' struggle

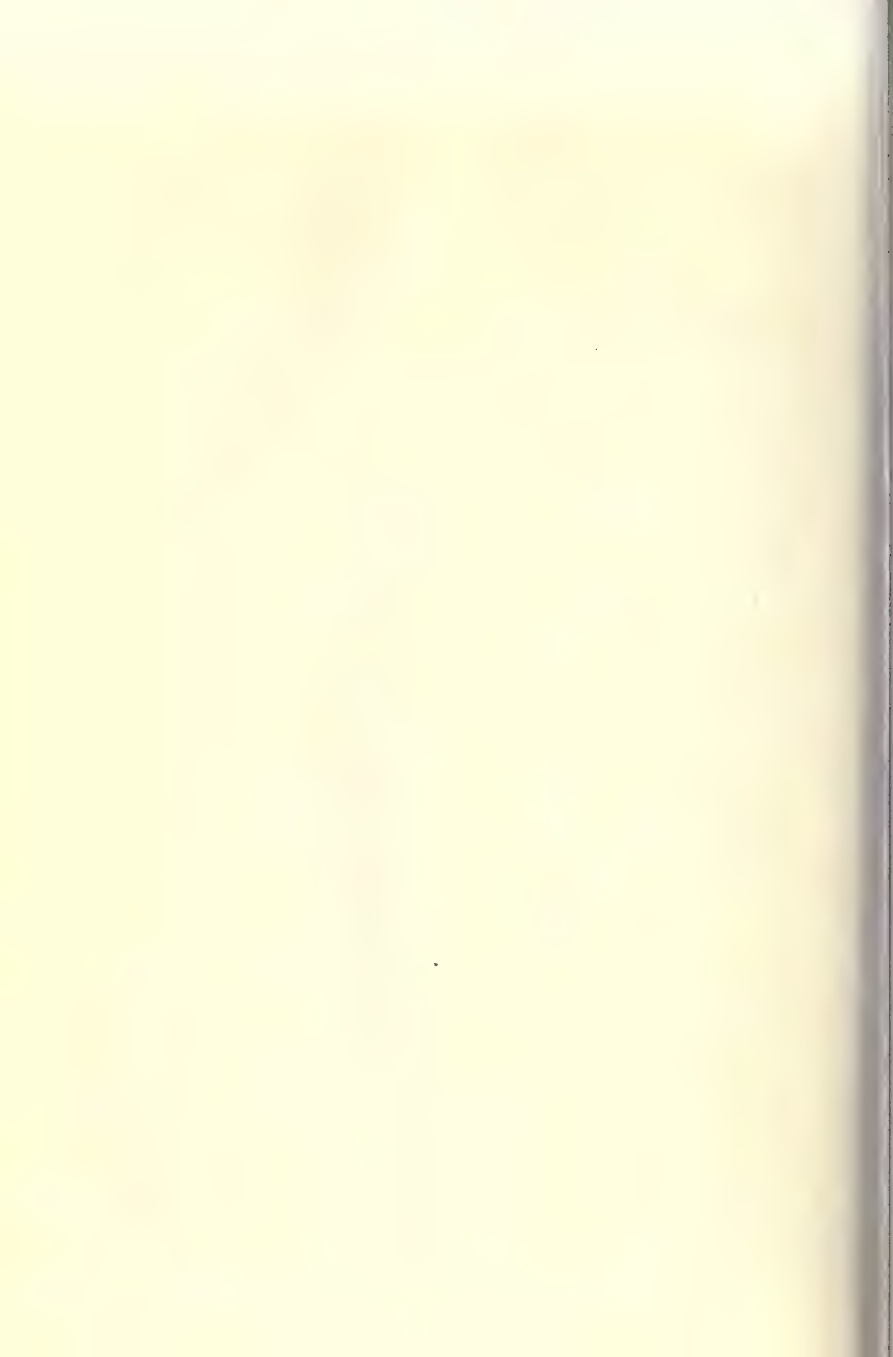
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was rung up in 1739, the curtain fell for the last time in the last months of 1823, when the downfall of Franco-Spanish influence in America was finally decreed. Horace Walpole was not far wrong when he stated in Parliament that England could hardly contend against the two Bourbons single-handed, and the result was always a balanced contest. England triumphed over the two allies for a moment in 1763, only to fall prostrate in 1783. Between 1763 and 1807 she struggled hard once more, but failed in her last chance of securing dominion on the South American continent. England could baffle France, but Spain overweighed the balance, and, if a real equilibrium was to be found, an ally in the New World must be sought. This counterpoise was first found in 1823—not indeed in an ally, but in an independent helper against Franco-Spanish interference in the New World. In September of that year Canning, acting for England, bade France interfere in the New World at her peril; in December Monroe and Adams, on behalf of the United States, gave warning both to France and Spain, and clinched the Englishman's argument. Bourbonism in its two branches was at length met in the New World by Anglo-Saxondom in its two branches, and the result was the entire defeat of the two Latin Powers and the dissolution of that once formidable union, which had first threatened the English dominion in 1739."

The seizure of the enemy's colonies suggested itself as the obvious preliminary of the Spanish War, and Admiral Vernon was selected to command the sea-forces. It has been said with considerable justice that 'Old Grog' had two capital enemies, to wit, his tongue and his pen. His peculiar nickname was due to the fact



THE "VICTORY",



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that he was the inventor of the celebrated beverage, which in turn received its title from the grogram breeches or cloak which he wore. Vernon was a fine fighter, somewhat cantankerous, impatient, and imperious. In some respects he reminds one of the late Lord Fisher. He certainly did his utmost to improve naval tactics, and the reward of a grateful—or ungrateful—country was the striking off of his name from the list of flag-officers for publishing a couple of pamphlets. Among those who served in his fleet were Smollett and George Washington's brother.

With a mere half-dozen men-of-war Vernon made a brilliant attack on Porto Bello, some seventy miles from Panama, where the Plate ships were loaded. The bay and harbour were heavily gunned, some hundreds of weapons being mounted at various points. With a mere handful of men—some 200 soldiers only—Vernon set out to carry the place, although the various garrisons alone vastly outnumbered the troops at his disposal.

After silencing the Iron Castle at the entrance, storming parties were landed and the town capitulated. There was little loss of life on either side. The Admiral, reinforced by bomb-vessels and fire-ships, but leaving his flagship at Porto Bello, then sailed to Cartagena, the scene of one of Drake's dashing exploits, and after a noisy demonstration lasting several hours, proceeded to bombard the fortress of Chagres. The attack is particularly interesting because it was the first time in modern history that a fort fell to the gunnery of ships with no assistance from the shore.

The Government at home was now fitting out a squadron of twenty-one sail-of-the-line, together with frigates and fire-ships, under Rear-Admiral Sir Chaloner

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Ogle. With them were transports carrying 12,000 troops under Lord Cathcart. While waiting for these reinforcements, the sailing of which was considerably delayed, Vernon heard that a Spanish squadron had sailed for Cartagena, and that a number of French vessels had arrived at Hispaniola (San Domingo). Vernon betook himself to Port Royal to await Ogle, for he could do nothing with the small force at his disposal. Shortly after the arrival of the long-expected reinforcements the French left the West Indies, and it was decided to attack Cartagena. Cathcart had died at Dominica and been succeeded by General Wentworth. Between the latter and Vernon no love was lost.

In addition to the natural protection afforded by a narrow passage, the entrance to the port was defended on the one side by Fort St Louis and several redoubts, and on the other by batteries. On a small island stood another fort known as St Joseph; a boom, cables, and four guard-ships afforded additional security. Before reaching the city, with its further defence works, a second passage had to be traversed. This in turn was defended by a fort and a battery, while two vessels had been sunk on a shoal to prevent any attempted forcing by the enemy.

In due course, although not without difficulty, forts St Louis and St Joseph were captured, and the ships got through the first passage. Notwithstanding sickness, troops were landed for the final advance, and some of the smaller ships manœuvred the second channel. Apparently both the Admiral and the General lost heart at one and the same moment. Vernon refused to advance the 'heavy fathers' of the fleet; Wentworth lost all initiative. This, despite the destruction of forts and the sinking of ships by the Spaniards

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themselves so that they might not fall into the hands of the hated—and apparently triumphant—English. “The ultimate failure of the attack on Cartagena,” says Admiral Colomb, “is not explained, and that is all we can say about it.” Following unsuccessful attempts on Cuba and Panama, Vernon returned to England. To the end of his days he blamed Wentworth for the failure of the operations in the West Indies after the arrival of the reinforcements.

When George Anson returned from his famous voyage about which people continue to read after a lapse of nearly two centuries, it was said of him that he had been “round the world but never in it.” Contemporaries have oftentimes a hard, cynical way of uttering half-truths which it is the duty of the historian to penetrate and rectify. To begin with, the *Centurion* (60) was only a fourth-rate ship, and her five consorts were smaller. Anson’s ‘crews’ consisted of 170 men, of whom 32 were invalids or almost so, and 98 marines. Chelsea Hospital was called upon to supply 500 pensioners, but 241 deserted and their places were filled by recruits to the number of 210. At St Catherine (Brazil) 80 sick were landed from the flagship, and many more from the other vessels. Bad storms, scurvy, leaks, and other disasters devastated the continually decreasing company. Is it to be wondered at that Anson saw little of the world?

The Commodore’s voyage was part of the policy of the Government to cut off Spain’s source of supplies by attacking her distant possessions. His instructions were to proceed to the Cape Verde Islands, thence to St Catherine, and to proceed to the South Seas either round Cape Horn or through the Straits of Magellan, where he was to “annoy and distress the Spaniards,

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either by sea or on land " to the utmost of his power. Narrowly missing a stronger enemy squadron, Anson duly arrived at St Catherine, as mentioned above, and after refitting, set sail again. For three months he encountered nothing but storms, and the ships scattered. Eventually the Commodore anchored at Juan Fernandez, where a solitary sloop rejoined him. The *Gloucester* (50) put in later, and also one of the two victuallers. The others never turned up. With the exception of a ship that was wrecked, they returned from whence they came. The crews of the three vessels now with Anson had totalled 961 when they left St Helens; they now numbered 335 only. The survivors had buried no fewer than 626 of their comrades. Soon after starting once more the *Tryal* (8) was scuttled and her men transferred to a prize taken by the *Centurion*. At last the tide was beginning to turn, for three vessels had been captured since leaving Robinson Crusoe's island.

Paita proved easy prey, and Anson headed for the coast of Mexico, where he hoped to secure what the Admiralty termed "the Acapulcho ship," which sailed from the town of that name to Manila "at a certain time of the year, and generally returns at a certain time." The galleon was not so much as sighted.

Anson now sailed for China. "In danger oft" from gales and sickness, he reached Macao in the middle of November 1742, and after having been received by the Viceroy of Canton, bluntly informed his crew that he would recross the Pacific and make another attempt to find the Acapulcho ship. On this occasion good fortune attended him, and the *Nuestra Senhora de Cabodonga* and treasure valued at about £400,000 were captured after half an hour's fight. After an interval

Anson Goes Round the World

of three years and nine months Anson arrived off Portsmouth on June 15, 1744. It was not until he reached the English Channel that the Commodore heard that England was at war with France. Anson was appointed Rear-Admiral of the Blue, which he resigned because the Admiralty, indulging its habitual follow-my-leader policy, would not confirm his promotion of Lieutenant Brett as acting captain of the *Centurion*.

Nearer home naval affairs were not prospering. In the previous year Mathews had fought an indecisive action against an inferior combined Spanish and French squadron. In the west a successful raid was made by the French on Nova Scotia in 1744, but it was nothing more than a raid, and in the following year Commodore Warren won a brilliant success in a combined naval and military operation by capturing Louisburg, the Gibraltar of the New World, after a siege lasting forty-seven days. In the East Indies Captain Peyton fought an indecisive action with La Bourdonnais in 1746, and on his retirement Madras was attacked and capitulated. While it is true that one of Peyton's 60-gun ships became leaky, this can scarcely excuse him for having refused to tackle his adversary in a serious manner, particularly as the squadron of La Bourdonnais was far inferior in every respect, seven of the eight ships being armed merchantmen. Rear-Admiral Griffin, Peyton's successor, was no whit better than the commander whom he had superseded. At last Boscawen was sent out with an overwhelming armament. No naval engagement took place, however, and after bombarding Pondicherry from the sea with little effect and besieging the French stronghold for nearly two months, the Admiral

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withdrew. In the same year an expedition originally intended for the subjugation of Quebec was launched against Lorient without success, and the French failed to recapture Cape Breton.

In the ensuing Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle Louisburg was restored to France and Madras to England, but the question of the right of search was discreetly omitted from the parchment sealed in 1748.

CHAPTER XVI

With Hawke at Quiberon

Our bells are worn threadbare with ringing for victories.

HORACE WALPOLE

SO far as Britain was concerned, the Seven Years War began at sea with a French expedition to Minorca. Vice-Admiral the Hon. John Byng, fourth son of Viscount Torrington, in command of thirteen ships, was dispatched with a regiment of foot to relieve the island, where Lord Blakeney was offering a spirited defence in the castle of St Philip. In the engagement which ensued on May 20, 1756, Temple West, the Admiral's second-in-command, showed himself infinitely more capable than his senior officer, for while the former boldly attacked, the latter was so slow in getting into action that when night fell the battle was still undecided. M. de la Galissonnière's dozen vessels were able to retire, leaving three British ships badly injured, 43 men killed and 168 wounded, and the fleet in disorder.

Instead of searching for the Frenchmen, the council of war held on the following day decided that Minorca should be abandoned for the protection of Gibraltar. Blakeney held out until the 24th, and had then no other alternative but to surrender. No serious effort had been made by Byng to land the soldiers.

The Admiral's lack of success was due to a fixed belief that he would fail—before sighting Minorca he

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had written home that "the throwing men into the castle will only enable it to hold out a little longer time, and add to the number that must fall into the enemy's hands" — the inability to take risks, and strict adherence to the fighting rules that then obtained. The orders were for van, centre, and rear to attack van, centre, and rear, and as the enemy only had a dozen ships and Byng thirteen, he actually denuded himself of the advantage afforded by an additional vessel and ordered her to leave the line.

Byng was tried by court-martial at Portsmouth. He was found guilty of negligence and sentenced to death. If he had suffered from moral cowardice, he certainly showed considerable strength of character on the day of his execution. He exchanged sleeve-links with his valet, remarking as he did so, "Yours will do to be buried with." Watching the spectators on shore and ships who were making a Roman holiday of the tragedy, he said to one of his friends, "I fear many of them will be disappointed: they may hear where they are, but they can't all see!" As he began to tie a white handkerchief over his eyes some one offered to do it for him. "I am much obliged to you," he remarked; "thank God, I can do it myself. I think I can. I am sure I can!" Five bullets struck the ill-fated Admiral, and he fell forward dead on the quarterdeck of the guardship *Monarque*.

"In this country," Voltaire wrote, "it is useful to kill an admiral now and then 'just to encourage the others.'" The remark was entirely true of the administration of the effete Duke of Newcastle, who was "unfit," according to George II, "to be chamberlain to the smallest court in Germany."

Hawke, who superseded Byng, had fought brilliantly

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in the unfortunate battle of Toulon in 1744, taken half a dozen Frenchmen off Belleisle in 1747, and served in Nova Scotia and as Port Admiral at Portsmouth. When Louis XV began to collect a large fleet at Brest preparatory to the invasion of England Hawke was placed in command of the blockading squadron in the Bay of Biscay, a task which he carried out far more efficiently than his predecessors. Excepting when a strong westerly gale was blowing, Hawke was always at his post; as soon as it began to subside he left his retreat at Torbay to renew his vigilance.

Taking advantage of the temporary absence of Boscawen from his station off Toulon, La Clue sailed to effect a junction with the Brest Fleet. With fourteen sail-of-the-line and a number of frigates, sloops, and fire-ships, the English commander gave chase, and on August 18, 1759, came in touch with La Clue's ships. One was taken prize, two ran ashore, and two others sought refuge in Portuguese waters. Boscawen—he was called "Old Dreadnought" by the sailors—set on fire those which had been beached and captured the others—for which the Government afterward apologized.

In the following winter Hawke was forced by a gale to put into Torbay. When it had subsided he slipped out again to find that Conflans, like La Clue, had taken advantage of the opportunity to get out. What happened is well told by a chaplain who seems to have enjoyed himself mightily as a non-combatant spectator. His interesting description has also the advantage of being extraordinarily accurate:

"On the 14th November (1759)," he writes, "Sir Edward Hawke hoisted his flag on board the *Royal*

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George in Torbay, where the fleet had put in a few days before, through stress of weather. The same evening we stood out to sea, with twenty-three ships of the line and two frigates; and on the 16th were within eight or nine leagues of the isle of Ushant. In the afternoon we fell in with some English transports returning from Quiberon, who gave the Admiral the information that they saw the French fleet the day before, consisting of twenty-four sail, standing to the S.E., and were at that time twenty-four leagues west of Belleisle. The intelligence was received with universal acclamations, and every ship prepared for action. The Admiral lost not a minute of time, but pursued with the utmost alertness. In the evening of the 18th the wind came on fresh from the westward, and we spread all our canvas to court the prosperous gale. On the 20th, about half an hour after eight in the morning, the *Maidstone* frigate let fly her topgallant-sails,¹ which was a signal for discovering a fleet; at nine, not a doubt was left of the happy hour being arrived which we had six months been impatiently expecting. We ascertained them to be the French squadron of twenty-one sail of the line, and three smaller ships; and that they were then chasing Captain Duff's frigates and bombs, the destruction of which was one object of their destination. Upon their having a distincter view of our ships, they gave over the chase, and appeared to be forming a line to receive us.

“From the equality of the combatants, we concluded the action would be very great and general; but I may venture to assert, there was not an Englishman from high to low, who did not assure himself of victory. Upon our advancing, Marshal Conflans changed his

¹ Evidently topgallant sheets.

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plans, and put right before the wind towards the shore, seeking safety in his flight. At this critical time Sir Edward paid no regard to lines of battle; but every ship was directed to make the best of her way towards the enemy; the Admiral told his officers he was for the old way of fighting, to make downright work with them. At noon our headmost ships were pretty near them, and between one and two the *Warspite* and the *Dorsetshire* began to fire, and were then abreast of the Cardinal rocks. Presently after, the *Revenge*, *Resolution*, *Torbay*, *Magnanime*, *Swiftsure*, *Montagu*, and *Defiance* came into action.

“The firing now became very alert on both sides, and there was no distinguishing any longer English colours from French¹. M. du Verger, the French rear-admiral, in the *Formidable*, bore a very fierce cannonade from the *Resolution*; but upon the *Royal George*’s coming up, they hauled down their flag, and struck to Sir Edward Hawke. This was only a point of honour, the *Resolution* having the merit of subduing them. The *Royal George* continued advancing, and Sir Edward gave orders to his master to carry him close alongside of M. Conflans in the *Soleil Royal*. The French Admiral seemed to have the same ambition on his part, and it was a glorious sight to behold the blue and white flags, both at the maintop-masthead, bearing down to each other. The *Royal George* passed the *Torbay*, which was closely engaged with the *Thésée* of seventy-four guns, and soon after sent that unfortunate ship to the bottom. On the other side was the *Magnanime*, who kept an incessant fire on one of the largest of the French ships,² and in the end

¹ In this matter history repeated itself at Jutland. See *post*, p. 369.

² *L'Héros*.

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obliged her to strike. She afterwards ran ashore and was burnt.

“ The two commanders-in-chief were now very near, and M. Conflans gave the English admiral his broadside ; the *Royal George* returned the uncivil salutation ; but after two or three exchanges of this kind, the Marshal of France declined the combat, and steered off. The French vice-admiral¹ likewise gave Sir Edward his broadside, and soon followed the example of his superior. Another and another acted the same part ; the fifth ship escaped not so well. Sir Edward poured his whole fire into her at once, and repeating the same, down she went alongside of him. The *Royal George's* people gave a cheer, but it was a faint one ; the honest sailors were touched at the miserable state of so many hundreds of poor creatures. The blue flag was now encountered with seven ships at the same time, and appeared in the very centre of the French rear. Every observer pitied the *Royal George*, to see her singly engaged against so many of the enemy. It seems indeed a kind of degradation to so noble a ship to be pitied ; but really her situation would have been lamentable if the enemy had preserved any degree of composure, or fired with any sort of direction ; but their confusion was so great, that of many hundreds of shot, I do not believe that more than thirty or forty struck the ship.

“ Sir Charles Hardy, in the *Union*, with the *Mars*, *Hero*, and several other ships, were crowding to the admiral's assistance, when the retreat of the French, covered by the obscurity of the evening, put an end to the engagement. Happy circumstance for the enemy, as an hour's daylight more would have brought on their total ruin !

¹ De Beaufremont.

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“ The battle was fought so near the coast of Brittany, that ten thousand persons on the shore were sad witnesses of the white flag’s disgrace.

“ . . . We have burnt the *Soleil Royal* of eighty-four brass guns, M. Conflans’s ship, together with the *Héros* of seventy-four guns, both of which ran ashore near Crozie. We have sunk the *Thésée* of seventy-four, and the *Superbe* of seventy; we have driven the *Juste* of seventy guns upon the rocks, where she overset; and have taken the *Formidable* of eighty, the French rear-admiral, sixty-two of whose guns are brass. Ten or eleven other ships were aground, but got off again by throwing their guns and stores overboard. They are now crept into the entrance of the little river Vilaine, where we do not despair of setting them on fire. Whether we succeed in this or not, we have room to believe they have undergone so much damage that few of them will be able to put to sea any more. The rest made their escape the night after the engagement, under the command of Mons. Beaufremont, their vice-admiral, and stretched away for Rochefort.

“ We have had the misfortune to lose the victorious *Resolution* of seventy-four guns, and the *Essex* of sixty-four; the former struck upon a sand called Le Four the night after the battle, and next morning the *Essex*, going down to her relief, unhappily ran upon the same shoal. Our endeavours to get them off were unsuccessful, but we have this consolation, that almost all their people were saved, and are embarked on board the *Formidable*.

“ . . . It gives me a most sensible pleasure to assure you that Sir Edward has been very liberal in his praises without a single imputation to cast a shade upon the triumph of the day. The glory of the British flag has

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been nobly supported, while that of the enemy is vanished into empty air."

The commander of the *Magnanime* was a certain young officer afterward known to fame as Lord Howe. His opinion of Conflans was that he was "a very unskilful naval officer, who, deriving his notions of naval tactics from the military service, fancied that his fleet was incapable of being successfully attacked when his van and rear were guarded by rocks and shoals.

"When, in the general chase," he adds, "I had fixed upon my bird, I ordered my men up on the quarter-deck, and had one of the guns pointed at such a level that, when it was fired, the whole crew saw the ball strike the sea at the distance of not more than the ship's length. Having now ordered all the guns to be pointed according to the same level, I showed the crew how useless it would be to fire till we were close to the enemy. Ordering the men to return to their quarters, I gave directions that every man should lie down and not fire till I struck upon the enemy's bow. These orders were punctually executed, and with such effect that the French ship *L'Héros* struck after two or three broadsides. On account of the violent gale and the lee shore, we were not able to take possession of the prize, but came to an anchor close alongside of her. In the night the greatest part of her crew contrived to make their escape; in consequence of which I was soon afterwards sent by Lord Hawke on shore to a camp in the vicinity, commanded by a general officer, in order to demand the prisoners. The first lieutenant blustered a good deal, and said, 'If you took us, why did you not keep us?' I replied that nothing could have been more easy than for me

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to have sunk the vessel and destroyed every soul on board; that I had spared them on the faith of their having surrendered themselves prisoners, and that, if this plea of the lieutenant were once admitted, every conqueror under any circumstances of difficulty would infallibly massacre his prisoners in cold blood. The general was convinced by my arguments, and agreed that the crew of *L'Héros* should be considered as prisoners of war."

What greater contrast could there be than that of Byng at Minorca and Hawke at Quiberon? In a comparatively confined area of water abounding in rocks, with a heavy sea and much wind, Hawke fought till dark and then anchored, though some of his ships did not hear his signal guns and cruised about until dawn. During the interval the *Resolution* and the *Essex* were lost on the Four. To avoid capture the French flagship was run ashore. One enemy ship was taken and five were destroyed. Seven vessels sought safety in the river Vilaine, where they were compelled to remain.

The year 1759 was what Horace Walpole called it, "the Great Year." On land Minden and Quebec, at sea the breaking up of the Toulon Fleet by Boscawen and Hawke's victory at Quiberon were notable achievements.

Although Pitt said "We shall win Canada on the banks of the Elbe," and a somewhat cynical contemporary referred to his costly attacks on the French coast as "breaking windows with guineas," a combined naval and military expedition was sent out and justified itself in a way that makes this passage in British history beloved of every schoolboy. With the public Wolfe is, of course, the popular hero, and

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poor Saunders, his "colleague in war," is forgotten. The Admiral, who had circumnavigated the globe with Anson, represented Plymouth in Parliament, served as Comptroller of the Navy, and succeeded Hawke as commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, performed mighty exploits in the reduction of Quebec. The St Lawrence was uncharted, and every buoy had been carefully removed by the enemy. Saunders chose for the difficult work of making soundings and surveys a young petty officer of the name of James Cook, later to become famous as Captain Cook. Night after night he set out on his difficult and dangerous task. When the ships sailed a French prisoner on one of the transports declared in anguished tones that they would all go to the bottom. The captain overheard. "I will show you," he shouted, "that an Englishman shall go where a Frenchman dare not show his nose." De Vaudreuil, the Governor, frankly admitted to Paris that "the enemy have passed sixty ships-of-war where we dare not risk a vessel of 100 tons by day or night." On June 27th Wolfe and his men landed on the Isle of Orleans, below Quebec and on the other side of the river. Fire-ships were floated out to reduce the English fleet to charred timbers. The Admiral acted with prompt coolness. Sailors set off in their boats, secured the flaming derelicts, and towed them aground, where they could do no harm. The experiment was tried a second time and was no more successful than the attack made upon the French from across the river Montmorency. Far more daring than these abortive attempts was the running of the gauntlet of Montcalm's batteries by several of the English ships, which reached the upper reaches of the river, destroyed a quantity of French

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shipping, and enabled Wolfe to carry out a very daring plan. A bombardment by Saunders and the Point Levi batteries led Montcalm to assume that Beauport was the position chosen for attack. While Bougainville was watching the other ships above the city a picked band of some 3,600 men quietly proceeded down the river under cover of night to the Anse du Foulon, a tiny cove near the Plains of Abraham. The sequel was the capture of Quebec. A more concrete example of the loyal co-operation of the two services does not exist in British annals. No more help could be sent to America, with the result that in 1760 what remained of the French army surrendered in Montreal, and Canada passed to Britain. Louisburg, besieged by Boscawen and Amherst, had surrendered unconditionally two years before.

The first line of defence on the Seven Seas was the blockading squadrons which kept guard off the coast of the enemy: Boscawen at Toulon, Hawke at Brest, Duff at Rochefort, and Rodney at Havre. They watched for the Homeland, and they also kept guard for those who were fighting in far-distant waters. Anson, with a short interval, was First Sea Lord from 1751 to 1762. When he joined the Board he managed to break with precedent by securing the inspection and overhauling of the dockyards. He also helped to introduce some salutary reforms regarding promotion, which was perhaps to be expected. It was of Anson that Chatham spoke as "the greatest and most respectable naval authority that has ever existed in this country." During the last year of his administration Martinique, Granada, St Lucia, St Vincent, Havana, and Manila were captured, and in 1763 the Seven Years War came to an end.

CHAPTER XVII

Britain Loses an Empire

It is not cancelling a piece of parchment that will win back America. You must respect her fears and her resentments.

CHATHAM

IN the give and take of the Treaty of Paris (1763) England gained much. Canada, the French territory on the east of the Mississippi, Cape Breton Island, and the remaining islands in the river and gulf of the St Lawrence; Dominica, Granada, and Tobago in the West Indies; Minorca, in the Mediterranean, and the settlements on the Senegal, in Africa, fell to her lot. In India she retained all her conquests. Havana and Manila were returned to Spain, which surrendered Florida. Pondicherry, Belleisle, Goree, Martinique, and St Lucia were restored to France, and her fishermen were given the right to fish in Newfoundland waters.

Taxes and restrictions, a snowball fight, the firing of a volley, the burning of a ship, the throwing of chests of tea into the sea, the publication of a bundle of private letters, and the War of American Independence (1775-1783) had begun. At home the familiar weakness of despising one's enemy was indulged, with the inevitable result that Graves, in command of the station, was starved of ships. With only four sail-of-the-line and twenty-one smaller vessels he had an immense coastline to protect, military

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operations to support, and privateers to capture. At Bunker Hill Graves was certainly lax, for had he shown more energy and initiative he might have assisted Gage either to capture or annihilate the rebel colonists. In 1776 General Howe, assisted by his more famous brother the Admiral, was more successful, but in the following year General Burgoyne, operating from Canada, surrendered at Saratoga, a disaster due in some measure to the neglect of the British to patrol the Hudson River. It is evident that Washington had a clear perception of the tremendous importance of Sea-Power in the conflict, for at a later stage he wrote, "Upon decisive naval superiority every hope of success must ultimately depend."

Public opinion in France decreed that she should side with the American colonists in their effort to disown the Motherland. Already arms had been sent to the insurgents and American privateers fitted up in French ports, so that when Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee set foot in Paris five months after the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, these commissioners appointed by Congress did not find themselves in hostile territory. Their task was to procure help.

Young members of the aristocracy, such as Lafayette, burning with ardour to save the new republic, crossed the Atlantic. When news came of the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga, France, delighted that her old enemy had received a set-back, recognized the independence of the United States, and shortly afterward concluded a treaty of commerce and alliance. It is said that when Louis XVI signed the parchment he remarked to Vergennes, "You will remember, sir, that this is contrary to my opinion." England, which

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had given not the slightest cause for offence, regarded the treaty as tantamount to a declaration of war.

Choiseul had concentrated his attention on the Navy. His policy now bore fruit. D'Orvilliers fought an indecisive battle with Keppel off Ushant, and made good his escape under cover of night owing to the British admiral's supineness; D'Estaing's squadron sailed for America, eluded Howe's fleet in a lucky storm, and having made for the West Indies, landed some of the troops intended for the subjugation of St Lucia, though they afterward surrendered, and the island was won for England. Such deeds showed that Great Britain had lost something of her old prowess on the element hitherto regarded as particularly her own.

Another pet project of 'resolute Choiseul' was realized in 1779, when Vergennes, in accordance with the Family Compact, summoned Spain to take part in the naval contest. A second Armada prepared to threaten England, did indeed appear off Plymouth, to the alarm of all the good West Country folk, and with like ill-fortune was scattered by the winds. It came up with Sir Charles Hardy, but dared not risk a fight, and the bad weather that ensued parted the allies and drove them back in a shattered state. A much more serious attempt was made against Gibraltar, whose possession by England and the hope of securing its return had contributed not a little to Spain's joining the Family Compact in 1761. The siege lasted from 1779 to 1783, and is one of the greatest in modern history. During these years both sides fought with praiseworthy determination. Certainly Sir George Rodney and General George Elliott, afterward Lord Heathfield, made good their claims to a niche in the respective temples of naval and military fame.

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Rodney, in addition to capturing a valuable merchant fleet, and defeating a Spanish squadron in the early days of 1780, also relieved and revictualled 'the Rock.' In the same year a determined effort was made by Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, joined later by other Powers, to frustrate England's right of search in respect of neutral vessels, and war broke out between Great Britain and Holland.

On October 19, 1781, Cornwallis was forced to surrender owing to the blockade of Yorktown by the French fleet, and the cutting off of his land communications by Washington. In the West Indies better luck attended the British. Many islands had been lost, but De Grasse's ambitious project against Jamaica was foiled by Rodney off Dominique on April 12, 1782, in the battle of the Saints. He broke through the enemy's line and captured the French flagship. On the other hand, Minorca fell to the combined French and Spanish fleets after a siege of several months, and the French admiral Suffren supported Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sahib in their war against the British dominion in the Carnatic. It was not until September 3, 1783, that peace was restored between Great Britain, the United States, France, Spain, and Holland. The advantages were certainly not with England, which had piled up a debt of £100,000,000 sterling and been compelled to recognize the independence of the rebel colonies, whose territory extended to the Mississippi River.

If the American War of Independence reflected no great credit on the British Navy, some at least of her officers had done remarkably well. Rodney, for instance, captured a French, a Spanish, and a Dutch admiral, and added a dozen enemy sail-of-the-line

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to the strength of the service he so admirably represented. That some of the officers appreciated what was lacking is shown in their letters. Keppel, after his action off Ushant, complained that though both officers and ships were "fine," some of the former wanted "more experience in discipline," and that there was a general deficiency of petty officers. Kempenfelt expressed his surprise that "we, who have been so long a famous maritime Power, should not yet have established any regular rules for the orderly and expeditious performance of the several evolutions necessary to be made in a fleet. . . . The men who are best disciplined, of whatever country they are, will always fight the best. The Roman troops beat those of all other nations, not because they were Romans, for their legions were composed of people from all countries; but because their discipline was superior to that of all other nations. It is a maxim that experience has ever confirmed, that discipline gives more force than numbers. In fine, if you will neither give an internal discipline for your ships, nor a system of tactics for the evolutions of your fleet, I don't know from what you are to expect success, when you have the enemy in unrivalled possession of these advantages." Hood found fault with Rodney after his victory of the Saints because he did not continue to pursue the enemy at night: "Now, the whole business will be to come over again; for farther than the glory of his Majesty's arms having appeared with lustre, and the danger probably removed for the present from Jamaica, I can see no great benefit can arise from so perfectly complete and unrivalled a victory."

Despite all, England's sun was neither set nor setting. It was to shine more brilliantly than ever before.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Glorious First of June, 1794

Nothing can stop the courage of English seamen.

NELSON

THE storm known as the French Revolution burst in 1789. Pitt thought it would be of short duration, whereas it steadily gained strength and eventually involved practically every country in Europe. If France ignored the nation which he represented, if she refrained from poaching on British preserves or those of her allies, he was quite content to return the compliment. Then came the decree that the navigation of the river Scheldt should be thrown open. It had previously been guaranteed to the Dutch by Great Britain as well as by other Powers, including France. The execution of Louis XVI followed, and led to the French ambassador at the Court of St James's being handed his passports. On February 1, 1793, the French Convention declared war against Holland and Great Britain, the latter in due course entering into an alliance with Russia, Sardinia, Spain, Naples, Prussia, the Empire, and Portugal. Revolutionary France had not a single friend.

England had 115 sail-of-the-line, Spain 76, Holland 49, Portugal 6, Naples 4; a total of 250 battleships. France had 76, many by no means good, and the same may be said of Spain and Holland. Of Britain's three principal fleets, that of the Channel was commanded

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by Howe, Sir John Jervis was appointed to the West Indies station, and Hood was commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean.

The inhabitants of the great southern seaport and arsenal of Toulon, the majority of them royalists to the core, openly rebelled. Unlike those of Marseilles, who had raised an army against the Convention, they had gone so far as to call in the assistance of the enemy. English and Spanish fleets, under Hood and Langara respectively, blockaded the harbour, and troops which had been hastily landed commanded the town. It soon became evident that the Convention would have to retake the place by force. This was accomplished mainly by the resource of a young officer named Napoleon Bonaparte, who had his first fight with the English as commander of the artillery. After the reduction of Fort Mulgrave, which commanded the inner harbour, Napoleon began to bombard the now doomed city and the fleet in the roadstead. That night—it was December 17, 1793—Sidney Smith, a gallant young English captain of the sea-service, with a little body of equally brave men, set fire to nine battleships and fifteen frigates in the harbour. The naval stores were soon well alight, the flames spreading with bewildering rapidity, and the Spaniards exploded two powder-ships. On the 19th, Lord Hood in the *Victory* weighed anchor, and the British fleet left the scene of disaster with over 14,000 of the terror-stricken inhabitants on board, and four sail-of-the-line, five frigates, and several smaller vessels as spoil.

Horace Walpole characterizes Howe as “undaunted as a rock, and as silent.” He was certainly somewhat deficient in tact, and the combination may have brought about a lack of popularity with certain of his

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officers. They even went so far as to refuse to drink to the Admiral's health at their mess.

The chaplain happened to be a *protégé* of his lordship, and this lack of esteem quite naturally caused him a certain amount of uneasiness. He was, however, a man of excellent humour, and he made up his mind that this disrespect must cease.

His opportunity came one day when he was called upon for a toast. "Well, gentlemen," he responded, "I can think of nothing better at this moment than to ask you to drink to the first two words of the third Psalm; for a Scriptural toast for once may be taken from one of my cloth."

The toast was drunk with right goodwill. We may be reasonably certain that the officers were completely ignorant of the passage so unexpectedly referred to. There was a refreshing novelty about the idea that appealed to them. It was afterward discovered that the Psalm began with the words, "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me!"

After the battle of the Glorious First of June the above was the favourite toast throughout the Navy. The fight was the first general action of the French Revolutionary War, that great conflict of principalities and powers that was to go on, with only a brief cessation, from 1793 until 1815. "Never before," we read in the official *Moniteur*, "did there exist in Brest a fleet so formidable and well disposed as that which is now lying there. Unanimity and discipline reign among officers and men, and all are keen with desire to fight the enemies of their country on the very banks of the Thames and under the walls of London." The announcement was certainly calculated to inspire confidence in the prowess of the service.

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The state of the French Navy, it may be added, was in actual truth extremely unsatisfactory. At the beginning of hostilities the armament of the British sail-of-the-line was 2,716 guns in excess of the enemy, their broadsides aggregating 88,957 as against 23,057. The number of frigates was nearly two to one.

The French squadrons based on Channel ports tried their wings once or twice during 1793, but the cruises merely resulted in the dismissal and imprisonment of Morard de Galle and the beheading of several of his captains. The underfed, underclothed, unpaid rank and file were almost constantly in a state of mutiny, but while it was impolitic and perhaps impracticable to haul them before the Revolutionary Tribunal it was deemed advisable to make examples of some of their officers. On the English side of the Channel Howe was abused by both Press and public for not bringing the enemy to action. He sighted their ships several times but was unable to come up with them. When the fleet went into port to refit in December so great was the outcry that the Admiral expressed a wish to retire, which was not entertained.

On May 2, 1794, the Channel Fleet, consisting of thirty-four sail-of-the-line, was again at sea. Of these half a dozen were placed under the orders of Rear-Admiral Montagu for the purpose of guarding the outward-bound convoy and the East India Company's ships to Cape Finisterre, and two were to chaperon the merchant vessels to their destination. For immediate purposes therefore Howe had twenty-six sail-of-the-line and seven frigates. At Brest the French had collected twenty-five sail-of-the-line, commanded by Villaret-Joyeuse. In place of a delegate of the National Assembly such as had accompanied

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Morard de Galle, there were now two Government representatives, including one from the guillotine-loving Committee of Public Safety. Whoever it may have been who infused energy into the French fleet, whether Villaret-Joyeuse, Jean Bon Saint André, or Prieur de la Marne, does not much matter. The fact is evident from a remark made by Howe to Caleb Parry. "In full confidence of their own strength," the Admiral avowed, "and of the disaffection of the English, the three days of battle which ensued were the only instances during my long naval life in which the French determined to fight."

Owing to the partial failure of the harvest in 1793, the French had purchased foodstuffs in the United States. The grain-ships were now on their way to Europe, and Howe's orders were to intercept the convoy. This explains why the Admiral did not blockade Brest. He "barged about," like Beatty on a later occasion, and meeting nothing, appeared off Brest on May 19th, quite unaware that Villaret-Joyeuse had passed him in a heavy fog two days before. Within a few hours of learning that the bird had flown, Howe received intelligence that Montagu had taken a naval prize and captured several merchant vessels that had belonged to an English Newfoundland convoy. Both the frigate shepherding them and the sheep had fallen into the hands of Rear-Admiral Nielly, whom Villaret-Joyeuse had dispatched with five sail-of-the-line to meet the homeward-bound grain-ships. Montagu quite rightly asked for reinforcements. What more natural than that the French commander-in-chief, Nielly, and Vanstabel, in charge of the food-convoy, should effect a junction? Howe at once sailed toward Montagu, but learning from captured vessels that the

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direction steered by the Brest Fleet would not affect him, Howe set out in search of Villaret-Joyeuse. On the 23rd he was rewarded, and a long chase ensued which ended in a skirmish between Howe's advanced squadron under Rear-Admiral Pasley and the rear of the French fleet. It ended in the *Révolutionnaire* (110) surrendering to the *Audacious* (94) after sustaining a severe grilling on the part of the *Russell* (74), the *Bellerophon* (74), the *Leviathan* (94), and the *Thunderer* (74). The prize was not secured and eventually reached Brest, while the *Audacious* had received such severe injuries that she was obliged to make for Plymouth, and the *Bellerophon* also had been badly damaged.

On the following morning action was renewed at long range, but half an hour after noon the Admiral signalled his vessels to tack in succession and break the French line. The flagship, the *Queen Charlotte* (100), passed through it between the fifth and sixth vessels in the rear, but was followed only by the *Bellerophon* and the *Leviathan*. The *Queen*, for instance, made four unsuccessful attempts. The remainder passed along the French line and tacked astern of it. There was much confusion, and "in the heat of the action," as Captain William Hope of the *Bellerophon* writes in his journal, "it was difficult to know who was French or who was English, we was all firing through one another." The Admiral, however, gained the weather-gauge, and the *Indomptable* (80), and the *Tyrannicide* (74) were cut off and surrounded. The French rallied to their support and rescued them, though the former was in such a damaged state that it was necessary to send her home under escort. A French 74 separated from the fleet and fell in with the grain-ships, which reached home in safety. Fortunately

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for Villaret-Joyeuse, his losses were made up by the arrival of four other ships on the 30th, a day of almost impenetrable fog. Similar weather continued for several hours on the following day, though it cleared up in the afternoon with a burst of sunshine.

By no means the least interesting account of the battle of the Glorious First of June was written by a midshipman who fought on the *Orion* and was then only twelve years of age. William Parker was Earl St Vincent's nephew, and subsequently became a baronet and Admiral of the Fleet.

"The next morning [*i.e.* June 1st] early," he tells his father, "the signal was made to form the line of battle; we beat to quarters and got up sufficiently of powder and shot to engage the enemy. The enemy also formed their line to leeward. Upon our making observations on the enemy's fleet we found that one of their three-deck ships were missing, but counted 28 sail-of-the-line, which was two more than they had on the 29th May. We supposed the Isle d'Aix squadron had joined them, and the ship that we had disabled on the 29th had bore up for Brest or sunk, and some thought the *Audacious* must have taken one of them, and took her away from the fleet as she was missing the 30th May; but the best joke was that the French commander-in-chief had the impudence to say to those ships who had joined him that he had thrashed us on the 29th completely, and that he only wanted to have another little dust with us before he should carry us all into Brest. Our Fleet was formed, and we only waited to get near enough to the enemy to begin. At eight the action began, and the firing from the enemy was very smart before we could engage the ship that came to our turn to engage, as every

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ship is to have one because our line is formed ahead, and theirs is formed also. Suppose their first or leading ship is a 100-guns and ours a 74, our ship must engage her. I believe we were the ninth or tenth ship; our lot fell to an 80-gun ship, so we would not waste our powder and shot by firing at other ships, though I was sorry to say they fired very smartly at us and unluckily killed two men before we fired a gun, which so exasperated our men that they kept singing out, '*For God's sake, brave Captain, let us fire! Consider, sir, two poor souls are slaughtered already!*' But Captain Duckworth would not let them fire till we came abreast of the ship we were to engage, when Captain Duckworth cried out, 'Fire my boys, fire!' upon which our enraged boys gave them such an extraordinary warm reception that I really believe it *struck the rascals with the panic*. The French ever since the 29th (because we so much damaged one of their ships) called us the *little devil* and the *little black ribband*, as we have a black streak painted on our side. They made the signal for three or four of their ships to come down and sink us, and if we struck to them to give us no quarter; but all this did not in the least dishearten our ship's company, and we kept up a very smart fire when some of the enemy's masts and yards went over their side, which we gave credit for some of our doing. The smoke was so thick that we could not at all times see the ships engaging ahead and astern. Our main-topmast and main yard being carried away by the enemy's shot, the Frenchman gave three cheers, upon which our ship's company, to show they did not mind it, returned them the three cheers, and after *that* gave them a furious broadside. About this time a musket ball came and struck Captain

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Duckworth between the bottom part of his thumb and finger, but very slightly, so that he only wrapped a handkerchief about it, and it is now almost quite well. But to proceed with my account, at about ten the *Queen* broke their line again, and we gave three cheers at our quarters; and now we engaged whichever ship we could best. A ship of 80 guns, which we had poured three or four broadsides into on the 29th May, we saw drawing ahead on our lee quarter to fire into us, which ship our ship's company had a great desire to have made strike to us on the 29th, and now quite rejoiced at having an opportunity of engaging her again, gave three cheers at their quarters, and began a very smart firing at their former antagonist. Their firing was not very smart, though she contrived to send a red-hot shot into the captain's cabin, where I am quartered, which kept rolling about and burning everybody, when gallant Mears, our first lieutenant, took it up in his speaking-trumpet and threw it overboard. At last, being so very close to her, we supposed her men had left their quarters, as Frenchmen do not like close quarters. She bore down to leeward of the fleet, being very much disabled. The signal was made for *Gibraltar* and *Culloden* to cover us from the fire of the enemy, as we were very much disabled. Our ship's company were employed in cutting away the wreck, some of which was on fire, which we soon put out by drawing water with our fire buckets. The ships that were not disabled still engaged the enemy. At half-past one the *Brunswick's* mizen and main masts were shot away, and she went to leeward of the fleet; and we were very much afraid she would have been taken. At last we saw her bear up and set all the sail she could, but there was no possibility of her



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getting into our line again. At two the firing ceased, but we did not know whether the action was over or no. We were employed in getting ready for engaging, and were very close to the Admiral and perceived he had lost both his fore- and main-topmasts in the action, and two or three of our own ships totally dismasted. There were seven of the Frenchmen also dismasted, but some of them had still their colours flying. We saw one of them hoisting a little small sail and egging down, and she would soon have joined her own fleet had not Mr Mears seen it, and let fly an 18-pdr. right astern of her, which made her strike her colours and hoist English, and strike her sail also. Captain Duckworth ordered no more guns to be fired at her; and then we had it in our power to say that she struck to the *Orion*. The French Fleet then ran away like cowardly rascals, and we made all the sail we could. Lord Howe ordered our ships that were not very much disabled to take the prizes in tow, and our own dismasted ships, who were erecting jury masts as fast as possible. But I forgot to tell you that the ship which struck to us was so much disabled that she could not live much longer upon the water, but gave a dreadful reel and lay down on her broadside. We were afraid to send any boats to help them, because they would have sunk her by too many poor souls getting into her at once. You could plainly perceive the poor wretches climbing over to windward and crying most dreadfully. She then righted a little, and then her head went down gradually, and then sunk, so that no more was seen of her. . . .”¹

This remarkable letter, which is much more enter-

¹ *The Last of Nelson's Captains*, by Admiral Sir Augustus Phillimore, K.C.B. (London, 1891), pp. 32-34.

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taining than the official journal of the *Orion*, ends on a sad note. Parker tells us that on returning to Plymouth the men smuggled a great deal of liquor on board, which they imbibed, and then mutinied, releasing the prisoners. Twenty were put in irons and afterward punished with an unmentioned number of lashes apiece. When the culprits were sufficiently sober they wept like children, but one cannot help thinking that coming events were casting their shadows before, and that the mutiny at the Nore was already in the making.

We cannot, of course, understand a battle by merely following the evidence of a solitary eyewitness. The idea of 'Black Dick,' as Howe was familiarly called by the sailors, was to attack the French centre, break through the line, and engage to leeward. Each ship was to attack the ship opposed to her.

The ship marked out for attack by the *Queen Charlotte* was the French flagship, the *Montagne*. When breaking the line Howe shouted to Bowen, the master, to starboard the helm. "But we shall be on board the *Jacobin*," Bowen replied in some amazement. "What is that to you, sir?" the Admiral retorted. "I don't care if *you* don't," Bowen muttered to himself. "I'll go near enough to singe some of our whiskers." Black Dick, who suffered with gout but not with deafness, overheard, and turning to his captain, remarked, "That's a fine fellow, Curtis." Bowen showed his prowess in no uncertain way, for the jib-boom of the *Queen Charlotte* grazed the mizzen-shrouds of the *Jacobin*. At the same time the former fired a broadside, and almost simultaneously her own fore-topmast was brought down by the enemy. This precluded Howe from getting alongside the *Montagne*,

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but her stern-frame and starboard-quarter received such a continuous and well-directed fire from the flagship that the casualties numbered nearly 300 in killed and wounded. The *Montagne* then hauled out of the line, followed by the *Jacobin* and several other ships, one of which, the *Juste*, had also been in action with the *Queen Charlotte*.

The French line was thrown into confusion as other English vessels obeyed Howe's order, although all of them were not able to do so. When Villaret-Joyeuse formed a line to leeward he returned with the intention of rescuing some at least of the ten French ships that were surrounded, and he managed to extricate four.

"The *Queen Charlotte*," Howe notes in his dispatch, "had then lost her fore-topmast, and the main-topmast fell over the side very soon after. The greater number of the other ships of the British fleet were at this time so much disabled, or widely separated, and under such circumstances with respect to those ships of the enemy in a state for action, and with which the firing was still continued, that two or three even of their dismantled ships, attempting to get away under a sprit-sail singly, or smaller sail raised on the stump of the fore-mast, could not be detained."

The gallant attempt of the French admiral alarmed Sir Roger Curtis, who advised Howe to recall his scattered ships, fearing a further attack on the part of Villaret-Joyeuse. This, however, never eventuated, and the British returned home with half a dozen prizes. At Portsmouth Howe was presented with a sword by the King, and gold medals were struck to commemorate the victory of the Glorious First of June. Unfortunately the great grain-convoy had escaped.

Meanwhile Hood, after having evacuated Toulon,

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had proceeded to Corsica, which a division under Horatio Nelson had been blockading. The first object of the Admiral's attack was San Fiorenzo. Without in any way disparaging the exertions of the troops, it must be admitted that the gallant conduct of the sailors, who dragged heavy guns up the heights in order to place them in a position to cannonade the tower of Mortello, which commanded the situation, contributed largely to the success of the operation. A sail-of-the-line and a frigate attacked the formidable fortification with ill-success. Hot shot was fired at the vessels with such precision that they were obliged to move to a less dangerous position.

The enemy retreated to Bastia, and on May 24, 1794, "the most glorious sight that an Englishman can experience, and which, I believe," wrote Nelson, "none but an Englishman could bring about, was exhibited—4,500 men laying down their arms to less than 1,000 British soldiers, who were serving as marines." Calvi was now attacked, and it was here that Nelson was blinded in his right eye by sand flung up by shot when in command of the advanced land-battery. The enemy garrison marched out with the honours of war in the following August. Corsica was conquered.

Three months later Hood was succeeded in the Toulon command by Hotham, who had fourteen battle-ships against the enemy's fourteen. On March 8, 1795, it was known that the French were at sea with the object of retaking the island of Napoleon's birth, but it was not until the morning of the 13th that the Admiral flew the signal for a general chase. While this was proceeding the *Ça-Ira* (84) collided with one of her consorts, which prevented her from keeping up

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with the others. Seizing his opportunity, the captain of the British frigate *Inconstant* (36) pounced down upon the huge battleship and brought her to action. A French vessel then went to the assistance of the *Ça-Ira* and took her in tow. Considerable damage had been done on board the *Inconstant* owing to the double fire to which she was subjected. Nelson, keenly alert to the slightest advantage, got abreast of the two Frenchmen and continued to wage a gallant fight for nearly two hours until called off by Hotham owing to the near approach of several of the enemy's ships. The action was thereby rendered indecisive.

During the night the *Sans Culottes* (120) separated from her consorts, and the *Censeur* (74), with the damaged *Ça-Ira* in tow, was too slow to keep up with the remainder of the French fleet. This enabled the *Bedford* (74) and the *Captain* (74) to attempt to capture them on the following morning. The British ships, as they bore down on the enemy, were received by a tremendous fire, which they could not return. For nearly an hour and a half the fight was sustained, until the *Captain* was little more than a floating wreck, and the distressed state of the *Bedford* made her recall imperative. Eventually the *Ça-Ira* and the *Censeur* surrendered to other vessels of the fleet.

The Brest Fleet had kept quiet since Howe's victory of the Glorious First of June. It was sighted at sea some twelve months afterward by Cornwallis, who beat a masterly retreat, for his reconnoitring force only consisted of five sail-of-the-line, two frigates, and a smaller vessel, while that of Villaret-Joyeuse numbered a dozen battleships and fifteen frigates. They were pursued all night, but during the dark hours three vessels fell considerably astern, and on

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the following morning the *Mars* was heavily attacked. Cornwallis was in no mood to allow her to be taken prize. With his flagship, the *Royal Sovereign*, and the *Triumph*, he went to her support, and after an engagement lasting until past seven o'clock in the evening the French withdrew, only to come across Bridport's Channel Fleet. A general chase was ordered by the British admiral, and on June 23, 1795, the enemy rear was attacked, the French *Formidable* catching fire and surrendering. The *Alexandre* and the *Tigre* also struck their flags. Approaching near the isle of Groix, some of the batteries stationed upon it opened fire. Mistaking the land for Belleisle, and afraid that some of his ships would ground, the Admiral hoisted the signal to discontinue the action, to the intense disgust of more ardent spirits. That his cautious policy was endorsed by the Admiralty is evident from the fact that in March 1796 he succeeded Howe in the command of the Channel Fleet.

In addition to several successful single-ship actions, much had been going on in the West Indies. Martinique, St Lucia, and Guadeloupe were all taken. The Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon surrendered in 1795; Elba was seized in the following year, and speedily evacuated.

With the idea of assisting Irish malcontents to throw off the British yoke, an expedition under General Hoche sailed with seventeen ships-of-the-line, thirteen frigates, five corvettes, six transports, and two small vessels in the middle of December 1796. Two of the battleships collided, a third foundered, and the various divisions were scattered almost at the beginning. Two ships only acquitted themselves with honour. These were the *Trajan*, which escaped after

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a chase of thirty-six hours, and the *Droits de l'Homme*. The stubborn fight put up by the latter with Sir Edward Pellew's frigates the *Indefatigable* and the *Amazon* is the most noteworthy incident of the affair of Bantry Bay. She came up with the Britishers on January 13, 1797. A fierce action ensued, which continued far into the night, heavy seas frequently dashing into the portholes and preventing the proper working of the guns. At dawn both the *Amazon* and the Frenchman ran aground in Audierne Bay, thirty-five miles south of Brest, and eventually became total wrecks.

Where was the main British fleet all this time, while the fate of Ireland trembled in the balance? The fifteen sail-of-the-line under Admiral Colpoys, which usually cruised off Brest, had been blown thirty miles to the westward, and two or three frigates under Sir Edward Pellew alone remained to watch the enemy. Colpoys was not aware that the expedition had sailed until the day after the majority of the ships had reached the mouth of Bantry Bay, and then he made for Spithead. The fleet at Portsmouth under Lord Bridport, which was "at home to relieve the fleet off Brest, if necessary, or to pursue the enemy, if he should sail," according to the statement of Dundas in the House of Commons, got under weigh when nearly all the scattered units of the French fleet were on their homeward voyage. This unsatisfactory method of watching an enemy contrasts strongly with Lord St Vincent's later injunction to "hermetically seal up" the French fleets in their harbours. This policy, it will be remembered, was that of Hawke. Blockade duty at this time was almost entirely entrusted to a few ships, and occasionally to frigates only; there was seldom a squadron before Brest in winter.

CHAPTER XIX

A Truant's Fight on St Valentine's Day, 1797

Where I would take a penknife, Lord St Vincent takes a hatchet.

NELSON

WHEN John Jervis stubbornly refused to enter the legal profession and determined to lead an honest life the sequel was of more lasting consequence than a good hiding. So defiant an attitude should have ended in discomfort and apology. In this particular case it aided and abetted a career, added several brilliant pages to the history-books, and was of signal service to the British Empire. On such apparently trivial matters destiny often depends. Jervis's contempt for lawyers was a settled conviction, which is the prerogative of youth and often enough the folly of old age. Barristers, counsel, solicitors—the whole breed of brief and bag—were rogues, for his father's coachman had told him so from the height and importance of the box-seat, and he placed implicit faith in the wisdom of that worthy. The world owes a large debt of gratitude to the old servant, whose name is recorded on no roll of fame. Indeed, it is doubtful if so much as a headstone marks the resting-place of his sacred dust.

'Master Jackey' obstinately fought the spectre of musty tomes and parchment and got his own way, just as years afterward he fought the solid reality of the

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Spanish fleet off Cape St Vincent and defeated it. The lad must have had many an unpleasant, and perhaps painful, hour with his father, who was solicitor to the Admiralty, and therefore prejudiced in the choice of a career. He was "throwing away a good chance," which is the best thing to do when an opportunity, however golden, is without other attractions. Your real man is an angler with a rod and tackle, not a fish swallowing the first available meal and finding a hook in hiding. The one has discrimination; the other lacks it. His son's pig-headedness, which is the term we use when folk do not see eye to eye with us, must have been particularly distressing to Jervis senior. Yet it is good to know that in due course he gave John his blessing and twenty pounds, which was better than being cut off with a shilling, though he never added to his initial contribution by a solitary copper. Swynfen Jervis accepted the inevitable as a barrister accepts a verdict against a client and recognizes that there is no likelihood of a successful appeal.

It was a family acquaintance who came to John's rescue, as such folk are apt to do when matters of paternal policy that promise well in theory show unmistakable signs of failing in practice. The affair was brought to a head by a most heinous offence on the part of the boy. The nature of the misdemeanour looks so terrible in print that we will not state it until it is absolutely imperative. He committed a crime against schoolboy morals. To use an apparent Irishism, he broke the Scout Law before there was one. *He played truant!* He ran away from school at Greenwich with a chum named Strachan, afterward father of Admiral Sir Richard Strachan, who captured four

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A WOODEN PADDLE-WHEEL FRIGATE, c. 1855



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French ships which escaped after Trafalgar. The boys hid themselves to Woolwich and became stowaways on a ship lying in the river. Whether they were discovered and sent about their business in the rough-and-ready fashion of sailors by being booted off the deck, or merely found the situation not quite so romantic as they had anticipated, is a secret which time has failed to divulge. Romance is robbed of its glamour when it is slow of development. Instead of the vessel moving majestically on its way it remained at anchor. There were no bellowing sails and the piping of the bosun's whistle; merely stuffiness and the reek of bilge. The experience evidently made a deep impression on the embryo First Sea Lord, which should be no cause for surprise. When he was an old man and a peer of the realm he referred to having suffered "much privation and misery" during his three days' escapade. He reached home at night, told his sisters what had happened, and was ungraciously informed that Mr Swinton, his schoolmaster, would give him a good hiding. Why a hiding is always dubbed 'good' usually passes a victim's understanding. The miscreant's reply was expressive and characteristic. He bluntly told them that as he did not intend to go back to school their prophecy was not likely to be fulfilled. Moreover, he was going to be a sailor. He refused to surrender to the law, privation and misery notwithstanding. If he was not actually rude he was certainly blunt and matter-of-fact. Brusqueness was part and parcel of his personality. All circumstances considered, it was perhaps as well for him that his father happened to be away at the time.

On the following day John repeated his settled conviction to his mother. She wanted her son to be

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‘respectable,’ inasmuch as one of her brothers was none other than Sir Thomas Parker, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer. The good woman had no desire to part from her son, who was at least comparatively safe when on land and within reach, whereas the sea offered the most dire possibilities and had not so much as a single redeeming feature. She confessed her grief to Lady Archibald Hamilton, wife of the Governor of Greenwich Hospital. The tale she told that amiable soul was related between sobs and punctuated by tears. Lady Archibald held the firm opinion that her visitor was distressing herself unnecessarily, and instead of commiserating with her in having such an unruly son, gave her candid opinion that the sea was “a very honourable and a very good profession.” Moreover, she enforced her assertion by offering to get the rebel a post in one of his Majesty’s ships. We know that “a little help is worth a deal of pity,” but in this case the help was being given to the wrong party. There are few things more unpleasant than craving sympathy and finding it not only withheld but regarded as foolish. We can imagine Mrs Jervis’s outraged feelings. In her distress she sought her nearest available brother, also a John, who endeavoured to get the boy to take a reasonable view, namely, Parker’s own, and to give up all thoughts of a seafaring life. John junior was obdurate, made further highly uncomplimentary remarks regarding lawyers, and said the kindest possible things about mariners. Lady Archibald aided the rebellious lad still further by introducing him to Lady Burlington. It was through the gracious office of the latter that he made the acquaintance of Commodore Townshend, who was about to sail to Jamaica in H.M.S. *Gloucester*

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to take up his post as commander-in-chief on the West Indies station. Beyond doubt the name of the island was familiar to the boy, for it was then of relatively greater importance than it is to-day by reason of its sugar-plantations. Negroes, coco-nuts, acacias, mountains, mantees, seals, but more particularly niggers, probably summed up the extent of his knowledge of the island in the Caribbean Sea. Such scanty information was calculated to fire ambition rather than to retard it. He would see all these wonderful things, and more. The Commodore consented to give the boy a place on the quarter-deck of the *Gloucester*. Swynfen Jervis offered no further opposition, and so with deep gratitude the law was relegated to limbo. From that moment until the end of his long career ships, sailors, and the sea became the passion of John's life.

The neat uniform of the midshipman of the twentieth century was not for John. "My coat," he said, "was made for me to grow up to; it reached down to my heels, and was fully large in the sleeves. I had a dirk and a gold-laced hat." His uncle, like his father, was now reconciled to his nephew's choice, doubtless influenced to some extent by the united insistence of Lady Archibald and Lady Burlington that it was "very honourable." His first meeting with Townshend was devoid of glory. The gallant officer received him in nightcap and slippers, and merely handed him a letter to the first lieutenant of the ship.

Thus at the age of fourteen, in 1748, to be exact, and the year of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which ended hostilities between Great Britain, Spain, France, and Prussia, and gained Silesia for Frederick the Great, to be particular, John Jervis was introduced to the

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whims of Father Neptune and the by no means pleasant conditions of the British Navy that obtained in the middle of the eighteenth century. The twenty sovereigns did not jingle in his pocket for any length of time after he had reached the West Indies. Greatly daring, he drew a bill upon his father for another twenty pounds. It was dishonoured. The consequence affords a clue to his character. You may better understand the type of man that was in the making by these significant facts: he no longer appeared at his mess, he mended and washed his clothes so as to save expense, and when his trousers wore out made another pair from the ticking of his bed. Henceforth he slept on the bare deck until the arrival of more prosperous days.

Jervis was always in the van in volunteering for service in any ship of the squadron sent on special work. On one of these cruises he met an old quartermaster named Drysdale. They were mutually attracted, and although Jervis had little to tell his elderly companion, Drysdale taught him all he knew of the intricacies of navigation. We may be sure that many a pleasant hour was spent when compass and lead were laid aside for the purpose of spinning yarns. As for self-reliance, the pupil learnt it in a hard school. "The iron entered into his soul." In temperament he was the exact opposite of Nelson, who was warm-hearted and lovable, whereas Jervis was cold and reserved. There is no need to tell the long story of Jervis's struggles, of his service with brave Sir Charles Saunders, who gave him his first command, of the part he played in Wolfe's attack on Quebec, and how he ordered the *Porcupine* to be towed by the ship's boats out of range of the guns of Fort Louis when a

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sudden calm fell at the wrong moment, of how he put to sea with the mutinous crew of the *Albany*, and of how he raked the French 74-gun *Pégase*, boarded her, and captured the prize, and with it a knighthood.

Jervis succeeded the incompetent Hotham in the command of the Mediterranean Fleet in 1795. The officers under him formed a very distinguished company—Nelson, Hood, Collingwood, Cockburn, Hallowell, and Troubridge. Few, if any, admirals have had at their service a more skilful band of colleagues. Jervis was worthy of them, and they of him. It was well for Great Britain that such was the case. Before the end of the year the squadrons of Spain, of Holland, and of France were against us, and Jervis had been ordered to evacuate the great inland sea and to abandon Corsica, which Hood had captured. Consider various other circumstances and you will realize that the present generation is not the only one that has had need of fortitude. Our great-grandfathers fought a militant France that eventually threatened to dominate Europe, as their descendants fought a militant Germany with similar ambitions. All honour to them, for their agony and bloody sweat lasted for the better part of a generation. War between England and France had broken out in February 1793. Belgium and Holland soon fell into the hands of the French; Prussia and Spain came to terms with the Republic in 1795. Pitt, full of boundless optimism and negotiations, hoped for peace before the Easter of 1796, instead of which Sardinia broke away and surrendered Savoy and Nice to the enemy. In February of the following year, the month of Jervis's greatest triumph, Britain was on the verge of losing the support of Austria, her last ally. The seal of

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supremacy had not been set on our sea-power, despite "the Glorious First of June." Jervis never spoke truer words than when he avowed that "England was in need of a victory." He fought for it against great odds, as England has often had to fight, but he used brains as well as ships and the usual paraphernalia of naval warfare. Things were at such a low ebb that the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street had suspended payment in cash. On land the Little Corporal, then lank, lean Napoleon Bonaparte, was going from triumph to triumph, but it is significant that although he was essentially a soldier from the top of his head to the soles of his feet, whose every nerve tingled with military ardour, he fully realized the all-importance of Sea-Power. "Let us concentrate all our activity on our navy and destroy England. That done, Europe is at our feet." This is the policy that he outlined to the Directory, and it was an eminently sane one. It was not followed, and although in later years he endeavoured to put his own demoniac energy into the shipbuilding yards, he never succeeded in wresting the trident from the hand of Britannia. Despite mutiny, and losses, and bungling, England kept her naval nose above water, and that of her enemies under it or in harbour. Folk who begrudge money spent on the Navy, if any such remain, should ponder these facts and atone for past sins by turning their pockets inside out for additional floating defences as an offering of gratitude to the memory of the old-time sea-dogs who fought twenty-seven French and Spanish sail-of-the-line with fifteen British battleships on St Valentine's Day, 1797.

Fortune had not been kind to Jervis's ships during the previous two months. Five of them had met

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with serious trouble of some kind, chiefly through striking rocks, and two had become total wrecks, one an 80-gun ship, the *Courageux*, and the other the *Bombay Castle* (74). These losses were partly alleviated by the detachment of five sail-of-the-line and a frigate under Rear-Admiral Sir W. Parker from the force commanded by Bridport after his abortive pursuit of the French squadron which took part in the famous episode of Bantry Bay. Even then the spectre of disaster seemed to dog Jervis. Within forty-eight hours of the fight off Cape St Vincent two of his 74's must need collide in the night, which is not surprising, for it was as dark as pitch and probably no stern-lights were carried by reason of the near presence of the enemy. The *Colossus* cut straight across the bows of the *Culloden* and played havoc with the fore-rigging of the latter. Fortunately there was no need for Captain Troubridge to take his ship back to Portsmouth for repairs; they were carried out at sea. The days of hemp and oak were strenuous enough in some things but abominably slow in others. There were no turbines and oil fuel to shorten the length of the knots, but only dank sails and tacking to lengthen them. A less energetic commander might have made the accident an excuse for a run to Spithead. Troubridge was not of that type. He would not have missed the coming scrap for worlds.

The battle of St Vincent was brought about in this way. It was part and parcel of one of the many schemes that had been projected to invade England. With France it was a tradition that had become a definite policy. The British fleet alone blocked the way. Napoleon tried his hand at it later on an immense scale and failed. The Spanish fleet was to

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sail from Cartagena for Cadiz in the first instance, join forces with French ships at Brest and Dutch vessels in the Texel, and then make for the Thames. The Spanish commander, Don José de Cordova, had apparently twenty-seven sail-of-the-line with him when he was sighted by the *Minerve* on the morning of February 13th; Jervis had fifteen. The discrepancy in the size of the opposing ships and in weight of metal was enormous. Jervis had two ships of 100 guns each, two of 98, one of 94, two of 90, seven of 74, and one of 64. Cordova flew his flag from the huge *Santissima Trinidad*, the Goliath of all ships in any navy at that time, a mammoth four-decker carrying no fewer than 130 guns. Her consorts consisted of half a dozen ships with 112 guns each, two with 80, and eighteen with 74. Of frigates, which Nelson rightly termed the "eyes of a fleet," Jervis had four, whereas Don José had twelve mounting 34 guns apiece. Figures are dull, unimaginative, listless things, but they usually have a story to tell. In this particular case their story is that whereas the Spanish had 2,176 guns, the British armament consisted of 1,252 only.

Of the three enemy fleets, that of Holland was undeniably the best manned, but as the last Dutch naval engagement of importance had taken place off the Dogger Bank so far back as 1781, a more or less general impression prevailed that their marine had grown a trifle stale. On the other hand, their triumphs of former days were held up to sailors and landsmen alike as excellent examples for the posterity of De Ruyter and Tromp to follow. The idea that "What man has done, man can do" was sedulously propagated. Certainly the notion was quite good in a day when there were no Navy Leagues to inspire the

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slumbering enthusiasm of lethargic folk. Doubtless De Ruyter's uncharitable performance of 1667, when he sailed into the Medway and bombarded Chatham, was kept in special remembrance. To prevent the concentration of these forces, then, the Spanish, the French, and the Dutch, was the task of immediate concern to Jervis, and his dogged persistency of purpose won the day, aided and abetted, it must be admitted, by the audacity of a certain young officer of the name of Nelson and of the rank of commodore.

There was a good deal of haze on the morning of the 14th, and a certain amount of it seems to cling to the battle yet. To be perfectly frank, some of the details of the fight are obscure. This is not altogether surprising, and is certainly not entirely characteristic of the days of wooden walls, dolphin-strikers, and cross-jack yards. The water which flows in Trafalgar Bay during the course of a day is scarcely more in volume than the ink that has been used in hopeless attempts to solve the problems connected with the battle that took place on October 21, 1805. Sea-dogs will apparently never tire of discussing whether it was the *Meteor* or the *Arethusa* which fired the final torpedo that gave the death-blow to the crippled *Blücher* in the second big North Sea action of the Great War. No one will ever know for certain, and that is doubtless why the heroes of the gun-turrets and the Big Men of the forebridges interest themselves in it.

It was Nelson in the *Minerve* who first brought news of the coming of the Spaniards. The little one-eyed, one-armed man had been busy withdrawing the British naval stores from Porto Ferrajo, in the isle of Elba, and had looked into Toulon and Cartagena. The latter harbour was empty. Crowding on every

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stitch of canvas to warn Jervis, he had scarcely entered the Straits of Gibraltar before he was chased by two Spanish line-of-battle ships. The *Minerve* was only a frigate of 36 guns, but the commodore told Colonel Drinkwater, as he gave a glance at his broad pennant, "before the Dons get hold of that bit of bunting I will have a struggle with them, and sooner than give up the frigate I'll run her ashore." The vessel was cleared for action, and was making excellent headway, when a cry arose of "Man overboard!" Lieutenant Hardy and some sailors launched a boat, but their efforts were in vain, for the poor fellow sank before they could reach him. The current was so strong when the little band turned their craft that they found it impossible to get back. Meanwhile one of the Spaniards was gradually gaining on them. Nelson did not hesitate a moment. "I'll not lose Hardy," he shouted. "Back the mizzen top-sail!" The manœuvre apparently jeopardized the frigate, which thus voluntarily gave up the race, but in reality it saved the situation. Imagining by the strange behaviour of the *Minerve* that other British ships had been sighted, the Spaniards made no further attempt to bring her to action.

A few hours later, when it was night and the weather inclined to be thick, Nelson passed through the Spanish fleet. His one eye was sufficiently bright and keen to discern that the signals which flashed out now and again were not those of his commander-in-chief but of Don José. On rejoining the fleet on the 13th he returned to his own ship, the *Captain*, of 74 guns.

The weather on the morning of the 14th was extremely hazy, but Jervis knew that he was no great distance from the enemy because their signal-guns

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had been booming all the previous night. Suddenly the alarm was given by the *Culloden*, and the *Bonne Citoyenne* and other vessels began to report the number of ships as they approached. Jervis, walking the quarterdeck with Captain Hallowell, remained imperturbable. "There are eight sail-of-the-line, Sir John." "Very well, sir." "There are twenty sail-of-the-line, Sir John." "Very well, sir." "There are twenty-five sail-of-the-line." "Very well, sir." "There are twenty-seven sail, Sir John." The officer who was reading the signals then took occasion to remark on the overwhelming numbers of the enemy. "Enough, sir," retorted the Admiral, "no more of that! The die is cast, and if there were fifty sail I would go through them." The answer evidently appealed to Hallowell, who smacked Jervis on the back and said in his bluff and hearty way, "That's right, Sir John, that's right. We shall give them a good licking." He flung in one or two adjectives which may be forgiven an enthusiastic naval officer.

If the man with the telescope betrayed surprise, we may be sure that Don José was by no means in an easy frame of mind when he knew the exact number of British ships as they appeared in two close divisions on the starboard tack. He had been told by a neutral vessel that Jervis had nine sail-of-the-line, apparently part of a convoy, and here were fifteen! The Spanish admiral knew perfectly well that notwithstanding the imposing appearance of his armada it suffered from defects which were the direct results of neglect and gross mismanagement. Many of the officers were totally unfit and ill-trained, men who had obtained their positions by influence, while the sailors and gunners were made up of all sorts and conditions of men,

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including jail-birds. As we have seen, the Spanish fleet was vastly superior in weight of metal, but the calibre of a cannon is not the only consideration. Most of the ships were good sailers and superior in speed to the British, but they were grossly undermanned, and sheets are not automatic.

At ten o'clock or thereabouts the fog lifted. The Spaniards were making for their port of destination, their ships in two straggling columns numbering twenty-one and six respectively, divided by several miles. While the smaller, or leeward, division was endeavouring to shorten the distance, Jervis sent half a dozen ships to chase the enemy, and shortly afterward brought his vessels into a single column, placing them between the two sections of the Don's forces. "We flew to them as a hawk to his prey," says Collingwood, "passed through them in the disordered state in which they were, separated them into two distinct parts, and then tacked upon their largest division." One ship of the leeward body turned tail and disappeared. The windward division now attempted to join forces with its consorts, but only three succeeded in doing so, bringing the total of the leeward ships to eight. Jervis determined to attack the main force first. Up went the signal to tack in succession, that is to say, each ship was to turn where the previous ship had turned as soon as she reached the position. It was repeated all along the line in answer, Troubridge in the *Culloden*, which was the leading ship in the column, being the first to acknowledge the order. For once Jervis betrayed emotion. "Look at Troubridge," he exclaimed; "he handles his ship as if the eyes of all England were upon him, and would to God they were!" The

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commander-in-chief's flagship, the *Victory*, was the seventh in the line, and as she was still pursuing her course before tacking, the *Principe de Asturias* and one or two ships of the Spanish leeward division attempted to break through the British line. If the *Culloden* had gained a mead of praise from Jervis, the *Victory* most certainly did at that moment. She was thrown into stays, and greeted the huge three-decker of 112 guns with a broadside that raked the Spanish vice-admiral's ship and made the *Victory* quiver from stem to stern. So devastating was the fire that the *Principe de Asturias* and her consorts fell off and made no further attempts of this description. In a word, the former was badly mauled at the beginning of the fight. The *Culloden* and the other ships which had turned were now busily engaged with the rear of the Spanish windward division, but Cordova's leading vessels, or his van, to be technically correct, were well in advance. With these he attempted to get round the British rear and join the leeward division. Nelson, in the third ship from the end, instead of carrying out the Admiral's order to tack in succession, executed a most daring manœuvre. The *Captain*, the smallest 74 in the British fleet, swung out of line, passed between the *Diadem* and the *Excellent*, that were following, crossed the bows of the oncoming Spaniards, and boldly attacked the *Santissima Trinidad*, the largest ship in the world. The Commodore was after big game, for the great floating fort of four decks and 132 guns bore Cordova's flag. He was immediately supported by Troubridge in the *Culloden*. Nelson, while definitely stating that he did not pretend to be correct as to time, believed that they fought half a dozen ships for "near an

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hour" without assistance, and was pleased to term the engagement an "apparently, but not really, unequal contest." The logs of various other vessels show that help was not long in arriving, though he was unaware of it, possibly by reason of the smoke. The *Blenheim* particularly distinguished herself by coming up and interposing between the *Captain* and the *Culloden*. The *Salvador del Mondo* and the *San Isidro* dropped astern. Collingwood, in the *Excellent*, then appeared and opened a withering fire on the former at close quarters. It was not long before her colours fluttered to the deck and the Spanish first-rate of 112 guns ceased fire. Collingwood understood by signs made by the individual who had hauled down the flag that the *Salvador del Mondo* had surrendered. He therefore passed on to the next ship, leaving the prize to be secured by another vessel. As he was forging ahead he was amazed to find the aforementioned colours flying from the masthead and her armament in action. However, he came up with the *San Isidro*, and brought the *Excellent* so close "that a man might jump from one ship to the other," to use his own phrase. British gunnery quickly decided the fate of the day so far as the Spanish 74 was concerned, for inside of ten minutes she gave up. Having been deceived in the matter of the *Salvador del Mondo*, Collingwood did not intend to lay himself open to further tricks of a similar kind. He blandly informed the commander that he must run up the British flag. This was done before Collingwood carried out further operations. He then signalled to another ship to board the prize, crowded on all sail, and passing between the British line and the enemy, engaged the 80-gun ship the *San Nicolas*, which, together with the

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San Josef, was hammering away at the *Captain*. "We did not touch sides," Collingwood admits, "but you could not put a bodkin between us, so that our shot passed through both ships"—the *San Josef* (112) was abreast of her consort—"and, in attempting to extricate themselves, they got on board each other." In other words, the riggings of the two ships became hopelessly entangled. The *Excellent's* broadsides worked frightful havoc, and the guns kept at it until the enemy ceased firing. "My good friend, the Commodore," adds Collingwood, "had been long engaged with those ships, and I came happily to his relief, for he was dreadfully mauled."

Meanwhile Nelson had laid his ship "on board" the *San Nicolas*. No sooner was the port cathead of the *Captain* locked in the quarter-gallery of the former than he gave the order to "Board!" "The soldiers of the 69th," he writes, "with an alacrity which will ever do them credit, and Lieutenant Pearson, of the same regiment, were almost the foremost on this service. The first man who jumped into the enemy's mizzen-chains was Captain Barry, late my first lieutenant (Captain Miller was in the very act of going also, but I directed him to remain); he was supported from our spritsail-yard, which hooked in the mizzen-rigging. A soldier of the 69th Regiment having broke the upper quarter-gallery window, I jumped in myself, and was followed by others as fast as possible. I found the cabin-doors fastened, and some Spanish officers fired their pistols; but, having broke open the doors, the soldiers fired, and the Spanish brigadier (Commodore with a distinguishing pendant) fell, in retreating to the quarter-deck. I pushed immediately onwards for the quarter-deck, where I found Captain

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Barry in possession of the poop, and the Spanish ensign hauling down. I passed with my people and Lieutenant Pearson, on the larboard gangway, to the forecastle, where I met two or three Spanish officers, prisoners to my seamen; they delivered me their swords. A fire of pistols or muskets opening from the Admiral's stern-gallery of the *San Josef*, I directed the soldiers to fire into her stern; and, calling to Captain Miller, ordered him to send more men into the *San Nicolas*, and directed my people to board the first-rate, which was done in an instant, Captain Barry assisting me into the main chains. At this moment a Spanish officer looked over the quarter-deck rail, and said they surrendered. From this most welcome intelligence, it was not long before I was on the quarter-deck, where the Spanish captain, with a bow, presented me his sword, and said the Admiral was dying of his wounds. I asked him, on his honour, if the ship was surrendered. He declared she was, on which I gave him my hand, and desired him to call on his officers and ship's company and tell them of it; which he did; and on the quarter-deck of a Spanish first-rate, extravagant as the story may seem, did I receive the swords of vanquished Spaniards, which as I received I gave to William Fearney, one of my bargemen, who put them, with the greatest *sang-froid*, under his arm. I was surrounded by Captain Barry, Lieutenant Pearson, of the 69th Regiment, John Sykes, John Thompson, Francis Cook, all old *Agamemnons*, and several other brave men, seamen and soldiers. Thus fell these ships."

Twice after the *San Nicolas* had been captured fire broke out in the forehold, and was extinguished by the prize crew. The *Captain* was so damaged that

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Nelson transferred his broad pennant to the *Irresistible*, the former ship being taken in tow by the *Minerve*. The rigging and bending sails had been cut to pieces, the wheel and fore-topmast shot away, and the masts severely damaged.

Collingwood had passed on to Cordova's flagship, but the masts, sails, and rigging of the *Excellent* had been so roughly mauled that she could not be brought as close to the enemy as Collingwood wished. In the hour's fight that ensued the British vessel received further wounds, but did not leave the *Santissima Trinidad* before the enemy was a complete wreck. Toward evening several of the latter's consorts came up, and Jervis flew the signal to withdraw. Collingwood secured a souvenir in the shape of a 50-lb. shot which had been hurled on board by one of Cordova's guns.

The *Blenheim* also attacked the *Santissima Trinidad*, and when she and the *Excellent* discontinued the action the engagement was renewed by the *Orion* and the *Egmont*. "55 minutes past 4," the log of the *Orion* records, "she struck and hoisted English colours, but we were obliged to abandon her, as several of their 3-deck ships which had been but little in action came down to their assistance, and the day being far spent, we discontinued the action. . . ."

Four Spanish sail-of-the-line were captured. Critics, both naval and lay, have said that there ought to have been more. Some have gone further and suggested that Jervis missed the opportunity of his life to annihilate the allied fleet, as Jellicoe is alleged to have failed at Jutland. The Admiral certainly seems to have been over-anxious to secure his prizes. A comparison of the log-books of the various ships is interesting. The master of the *Orion* writes that at

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4.55 p.m. the flagship of the Spanish commander-in-chief, with which they had been in action, "struck and hoisted English colours, but we was (*sic*) obliged to abandon her, as several of their 3-deck ships which had been but little in action came down to their assistance, and the day being far spent, we discontinued the action, and brought to on the starboard tack in close order of battle with the 4 ships which we had possession of, the Spanish fleet in a line on the larboard tack to windward of us. Observing several of their heavy ships coming down with an intention to rake the *Britannia*, both of us opened a heavy fire on them, which obliged them to haul off. At 6, both English and Spanish fleets lying to on different tacks. Employed the whole night repairing our damages, ready for renewing the action."¹

One of Jervis's *obiter dicta* was "The test of a man's courage is responsibility," and he acted up to it when Captain Calder hinted that Nelson had made an unauthorized departure from the prescribed mode of attack. "It certainly was so," replied Jervis, "and if ever you commit such a breach of your orders, I will forgive you also."

In discussing his tactics after the action, Nelson explained that "The Admiral's intention, I saw, was to cut off the detached squadron of light sail, and afterwards attack the main body, weakened by the separation. Observing, however, as our squadron advanced and became engaged with the enemy's ships, that the main body of the enemy were pushing to join their friends to leeward by passing in the rear

¹ *Logs of the Great Sea Fights, 1794-1805*, edited by T. Sturges Jackson, Rear-Admiral, vol. i, pp. 282-3 (London: Navy Records Society, 1909).

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of our squadron, I thought unless by some prompt and extraordinary measure the main body could be diverted from this course until Sir John—at that time in action on the *Victory*—could see their plan, his well-arranged designs on the enemy would be frustrated.”

Further criticism has been levelled at the old sea-dog because he did not make more of the Commodore's action. Yet Jervis received Nelson on the quarterdeck of the flagship, took him in his arms, and kissed him, using “every kind expression which could not fail to make me happy,” as the hero of the occasion avowed.

Calder arrived in London with Jervis's dispatch on March 3, 1797. On occasion they did things quicker in the eighteenth century than they do in the twentieth. England was in need of a victory, as Jervis had avowed, and he had given her one. The House of Commons passed a vote of thanks without delay, and the Upper House followed suit on the 8th. Sir John was created Earl of St Vincent, with a pension of £3,000 a year, Vice-Admiral Charles Thompson and Rear-Admiral William Parker became baronets, and Nelson was given the K.C.B.

“The highest rewards are due to you and *Culloden*,” wrote Collingwood to Nelson: “you formed the plan of attack—we were only accessories to the Don's ruin; for, had they got on the other tack, they would have been sooner joined, and the business would have been less complete.” “‘A friend in need is a friend indeed,’” Nelson replied, “was never more truly verified than by your most noble and gallant conduct yesterday in sparing the *Captain* from further loss, and I beg, both as a public officer and a friend, you will accept my most sincere thanks.”

CHAPTER XX

Camperdown and the Nile

Some day we shall lose the Empire because it is Buggins's turn.
FISHER

MUTINIES have been few and far between in the British Navy. Two broke out in 1797. Whereas previous outbreaks had been confined to single ships, 'the breeze at Spithead' involved a fleet. The grievances of the sailors were legitimate enough. One shilling a day for an able seaman and other ratings in proportion, leave to men when in port, the removal of long-standing differences regarding pensions, and better food summed up their demands. Lack of sympathy between the executive and administrative branches was the primary cause. Respectful petitions had been presented without avail. Eventually Howe posted from London with a brand-new Act of Parliament in his pocket and full powers to settle the dispute.

In the same week that the mutineers of Portsmouth and Plymouth returned to their legitimate duties trouble broke out at the Nore. The ringleader was Richard Parker. After a few weeks the men surrendered their vessels, the last being the *Sandwich*, which was brought in by the crew with the erstwhile leader a prisoner. Parker was hanged from the yard-arm, and a career not lacking in romance was ended.

It was well that the Dutch did not take the offensive

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at so perilous a time. They waited until October, when Vice-Admiral De Winter led a fleet of fifteen sail-of-the-line, a dozen frigates, and several brigs out of the Texel. On the 11th he was met by Admiral Duncan, who had at his command, though they did not all take an active part in the fight, sixteen battleships, eight frigates, and other vessels. According to the log-book of Duncan's flagship, the *Venerable* (74), "during the greatest part of the action, the weather was variable, with showers of rain, till half-past two o'clock, when it fell almost calm."

When the action began the Dutch coast was not more than seven miles distant, and the fleets were off the village of Camperdown, from which the battle took its name.

"About thirty minutes past twelve," to quote the same authority, "the action commenced by Vice-Admiral Onslow (second in command), in the *Monarch*, who broke through the enemy's line, passed under the Dutch Vice-Admiral's stern, and engaged him to leeward. The *Venerable* intended to engage the Dutch Commander-in-Chief, was prevented by the *States General*, of 76 guns, bearing a blue flag at the mizzen, shooting close up him; we therefore put our helm to port, run under his stern, engaged him close, and soon forced him to run out of the line. The *Venerable* then fell alongside of the Dutch Admiral De Winter, in the *Vryheid*, who was for some time well supported, and kept up a very heavy fire upon us. At one o'clock, the action was pretty general, except by two or three of the van ships of the enemy's line, which got off without the smallest apparent injury. About half an hour after the commencement of the action on the part of the *Venerable*, who began only five

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minutes later than our own Vice-Admiral, the *Hercules*, a Dutch ship of 64 guns, caught fire ahead of us; she wore, and drove very near our ship to leeward, while we were engaged, and very roughly handled, by four ships of the enemy. A little before three o'clock, while passing to leeward of the Dutch Admiral and Commander-in-Chief on the opposite tack, our star-board broadside was fired, which took place principally among the rigging, as all her masts came immediately by the board; soon after he struck his colours, all farther opposition being vain and fruitless."

Duncan had been unable to form a regular order of battle because, had he waited to do so, the enemy would have been too near the coast to allow of his breaking the line and getting between him and the land. De Winter was taken prisoner, and nine sail-of-the-line and two frigates surrendered. The British admiral became Viscount Duncan of Camperdown.

On the sunny and cloudless morning of May 19, 1798, the Toulon Fleet destined for Egypt set sail. Nelson's reconnoitring squadron had been forced to retire by a gale and made for Sardinia. With thirteen sail-of-the-line, all carrying 74 guns, and one 50-gun ship, the Rear-Admiral started in chase. After weeks of anxious searching he at last discovered the enemy moored in line of battle parallel with the shore in Aboukir Bay. The French fleet, under Brueys, consisted of thirteen capital ships, three carrying 80 guns and one 120 guns, and four frigates. There were three great gaps between the ships, which were flanked by frigates and gunboats. His van was placed as close to Aboukir Island as was practicable, and on it a few guns were mounted. In tonnage and armament the French had the advantage; in *moral*

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and fighting capacity the British were first. Napoleon and the army were far away adding triumph to triumph.

Nelson determined to sail between the enemy line and the shallows. Five British ships, led by the *Goliath*, crossed the bows of the first ship of the French van, inshore of the French line, and anchored abreast of one of the Frenchmen, while three more, including Nelson's *Vanguard*, stationed themselves on the outer side. Some of the captains for various reasons were unable to take up their correct fighting positions; the *Culloden*, for instance, struck a shoal and played no part in the battle. The enemy's van was surrounded and conquered, the centre became engaged, the rear alone escaped, Villeneuve, its commander, making off with two battleships and two frigates without attempting to fight.

"The actions," Captain Berry relates, "commenced at sunset. . . . At about seven o'clock total darkness had come on, but the whole hemisphere was, with intervals, illuminated by the fire of the hostile fleets. Our ships, when darkness came on, had all hoisted their distinguishing lights, by a signal from the Admiral. The van ship of the enemy, *Le Guerrier*, was dismantled in less than twelve minutes, and, in ten minutes after, the second ship, *Le Conquérant*, and the third, *Le Spartiate*, very nearly at the same moment were almost dismasted. *L'Aquilon* and *Le Peuple Souverain*, the fourth and fifth ships of the enemy's line, were taken possession of by the British at half-past eight in the evening. Captain Berry, at that hour, sent Lieutenant Galwey, of the *Vanguard*, with a party of marines, to take possession of *Le Spartiate*, and that officer returned by the boat

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the French captain's sword, which Captain Berry immediately delivered to the Admiral, who was then below, in consequence of the severe wound which he had received in the head during the heat of the attack.

“ At this time it appeared that victory had already declared itself in our favour, for, although *L'Orient*, *L'Heureux*, and *Tonnant* were not taken possession of, they were considered as completely in our power. . . . At ten minutes after ten, a fire was observed on board *L'Orient*, the French Admiral's ship, which seemed to proceed from the after part of the cabin, and which increased with great rapidity, presently involving the whole of the after part of the ship in flames. This circumstance Captain Berry immediately communicated to the Admiral, who, though suffering severely from his wound, came up on deck, where the first consideration that struck his mind was concern for the danger of so many lives, to save as many as possible of whom he ordered Captain Berry to make every practicable exertion. A boat, the only one that could swim, was instantly dispatched from the *Vanguard*, and other ships that were in a condition to do so, immediately followed the example; by which means, from the best possible information, the lives of about seventy Frenchmen were saved. The light thrown by the fire of *L'Orient* upon the surrounding objects, enabled us to perceive with more certainty the situation of the two fleets, the colours of both being very clearly distinguishable. The cannonading was partially kept up to leeward of the centre till about ten o'clock, when *L'Orient* blew up with a most tremendous explosion. An awful pause and death-like silence for about three minutes ensued, when the wreck of the masts, yards, etc., which had been

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carried to a vast height, fell down into the water, and on board the surrounding ships. A port fire from *L'Orient* fell into the main royal of the *Alexander*, the fire occasioned by which was, however, extinguished in about two minutes, by the active exertions of Captain Ball.

“ After this awful scene, the firing was recommenced with the ships to leeward of the centre, till twenty minutes past ten, when there was a total cessation of firing for about ten minutes; after which it was revived till about three in the morning, when it again ceased. After the victory had been secured in the van, such British ships as were in a condition to move, had gone down upon the fresh ships of the enemy, which occasioned these renewals of the fight, all of which terminated with the same happy success in favour of our Flag. At five minutes past five in the morning, the two rear ships of the enemy, *Le Guillaume Tell* and *Le Généreux*, were the only French ships of the line that had their colours flying, at fifty-four minutes past five, a French frigate, *L'Artémise*, fired a broadside and struck her colours; but such was the unwarrantable and infamous conduct of the French captain, that after having thus surrendered, he set fire to his ship, and with part of his crew, made his escape on shore. Another of the French frigates, *La Sérieuse*, had been sunk by the fire from some of our ships; but as her poop remained above water, her men were saved upon it, and were taken off by our boats in the morning. The *Bellerophon*, whose masts and cables had been entirely shot away, could not retain her situation abreast of *L'Orient*, but had drifted out of the line to the lee side of the Bay a little before that ship blew up. The *Audacious* was

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in the morning detached to her assistance. At eleven o'clock, *Le Généreux* and *Guillaume Tell*, with the two frigates *La Justice* and *La Diane*, cut their cables and stood out to sea, pursued by the *Zealous*, Captain Hood, who, as the Admiral himself has stated, handsomely endeavoured to prevent their escape; but as there was no other ship in a condition to support the *Zealous*, she was recalled.

"The whole day of the 2nd was employed in securing the French ships that had struck, and which were now all completely in our possession, *Le Tonnant* and *Timoléon* excepted; as these were both dismasted, and consequently could not escape, they were naturally the last of which we thought of taking possession. On the morning of the third, the *Timoléon* was set fire to, and *Le Tonnant* had cut her cable and drifted on shore, but that active officer, Captain Miller, of the *Theseus*, soon got her off again, and secured her in the British line."

It was a decisive victory, the only kind of victory that appealed to Nelson, who styled it a "conquest." Of the thirteen French battleships, nine were taken, one was blown up, one was burnt, and two escaped; one frigate sank, another was destroyed by fire, and two got away. Napoleon had been deprived of his only means of communication with France. Thus the sea swallowed his triumphs. From a political point of view the battle of the Nile paved the way for the formation of the Second Coalition against France, in which England, Russia, Austria, Turkey, Naples, and Portugal took part. For his brilliant services Nelson was created a baron and voted a pension of £2,000 a year, which was also to be paid to his two next heirs. The Earl of St Vincent, the commander-in-chief,

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enthusiastically referred to the battle of the Nile as "the greatest achievement the history of the world can produce."

To "Fighting" Berry the Admiral entrusted the charge of his dispatches for St Vincent, for which purpose he was given the *Leander* (50). With grim irony Fate played a trick entirely unworthy so gallant an officer. On August 18th, off Gozo, near Candia, the *Généreux*, which had escaped, appeared on the horizon. Berry attempted to show a clean pair of heels, but recognizing that the enemy was gaining in the race, sail was shortened and the decks cleared for action. The brave defenders of the *Leander* resisted manfully for over six hours until the mastless, rudderless hulk could be fought no longer. Berry, who was wounded, together with the officers and crew, was taken prisoner. On being exchanged, the captain received the honour of knighthood. He got even with the French after all, for in 1799 he turned the tables on the victors by capturing the *Généreux*.

CHAPTER XXI

How Nelson Taught the Danes a Lesson

I have a right to be blind sometimes.

NELSON

SO far back as 1780 Russia, Sweden, and Denmark had entered into a league of armed neutrality by which, in the terse summing up of Sir J. K. Laughton, they had "bound themselves to resist the right of 'visit and search' claimed by the belligerents, and to enforce the acceptance of certain principles of so-called international law: among others, the security of a belligerent's property under a neutral flag—'a free ship makes free goods'; that a blockade to be binding must be maintained by an adequate force; and that 'contraband of war' must be distinctly defined beforehand. As these principles, if admitted by England, amounted to the import by France of naval stores—masts, hemp, tar—from the Baltic, to be paid for by French exports, the English Government was resolved to contest them." From 1793 to 1800 Sweden and Denmark were neutral, but Great Britain, secure in her maritime supremacy, had continued to search merchant-ships, whether convoyed by a vessel of war or not. Matters were brought to a crisis by the capture of a Danish frigate in July 1800, and the subsequent passage of the Sound by a British squadron. At the moment Denmark was

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not prepared for hostilities, and entered into a convention with Great Britain which admitted the right of search.

When, a little later, the half-crazy Czar, dissatisfied with England as an ally, and led on by specious promises on the part of Napoleon, definitely renewed the League, the two Baltic Powers willingly joined him. He laid an embargo on all British ships in Russian ports, and generally showed that it was a case of "off with the old love and on with the new."

It was thought in England that negotiations, backed by a strong fleet, would be sufficient to sever Denmark from the alliance. With this object in view fifteen line-of-battle ships, afterward increased to eighteen, sailed early in March 1801. Soldiers were on board for service if required, and there was a considerable collection of smaller vessels.

The first general rendezvous was the Skaw. A period of heavy weather—bad winds, sleet, snow, frost, and rain—had set in. Believers in omens not unnaturally predicted the ill-success of the expedition, which was intensified by the loss of the *Invincible* (74) with some 400 souls. She struck a sandbank, floated off into deep water, and then went down.

The proposed terms were definitely refused by Denmark, but Nelson's "bold measure" of detaching part of the British fleet to attack the Russian squadron at Revel, while the other attacked the capital, did not appeal to the unimaginative Sir Hyde Parker, the commander-in-chief. Copenhagen must first be overcome. Eventually it was decided to make the passage by the Sound.

The British fleet, in order of battle, slowly threaded its way through the shoals on March 30th. Nelson

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commanded the van, Parker the centre, and Graves the rear. The guns of Cronenburg Castle, dominating the Sound, blazed away, as did those on the armed hulks defending the narrow channel, but the Swedish guns maintained a stolid silence. The fleet anchored a few miles below Copenhagen. Parker, Nelson, and several other officers boarded a lugger to reconnoitre the enemy's defences. Various soundings were made to the accompaniment of gun-firing, and it was found that the enemy had placed a formidable flotilla of thirty-three vessels, some fully rigged and others dismantled, including two 74-gun ships, a 70-gun ship, two 64-gun ships, and floating batteries in front of the harbour and arsenal. The Trekroner forts had also been strengthened, and there were cannon on shore.

To Nelson a dozen sail-of-the-line, eighteen frigates, and a number of minor vessels were assigned. Leaving the main body of the fleet on April 1st, he coasted along the outer edge of the shoal known as the Middle Ground, and reaching the Sound end, dropped anchor.

On the following morning several accidents marred the opening phase of the operations. Three battle-ships ran aground. The *Jamaica* frigate, with a convoy of gunboats that were unable to stem the counter current, made the signal of inability to proceed.

"A mind less invincible than Nelson's might have been discouraged," writes Mr Ferguson, surgeon of the *Elephant*: "though the battle had not commenced yet he had approached the enemy; and he felt that he could not retreat or wait for reinforcements without compromising the glory of his country. The signal to bear down was still kept flying. His agitation during these moments was extreme; I shall never forget

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the impression it made on me. It was not, however, the agitation of indecision, but of ardent, animated patriotism, panting for glory, which had appeared within his reach, and was vanishing from his grasp."

The following account of the battle of Copenhagen is based on that of Colonel William Stewart, an eye-witness, and "a very fine gallant man" according to Nelson.

By 11.30 a.m. the battle was general. Captain Riou, in command of the frigates, attempted to carry out the work assigned to the three unfortunate battle-ships which had run aground, and boldly attacked the Trekroner forts and the ships stationed near them. That splendid officer, whose vessels suffered severely, continued to fight until Parker flew the general signal of recall, and he was killed when retiring. The order was given at about 1 p.m., by which time the *Isis* (50) was badly damaged, and both that ship and the *Bellona* (74) had suffered injury from bursting guns. The fire of two Danish vessels had also concentrated on the *Monarch* (74), Nelson's flagship the *Elephant* (74) was being tackled by the *Dannebrog* (74) and two big prames, the *Bellona* (74) and *Russell* (74) were flying signals of distress, and the *Agamemnon* (64) was aground.

When the signal to discontinue the engagement was hoisted Nelson certainly put his glass to his blind eye and exclaimed to Captain Foley, "I really do not see the signal," but the incident is bereft of much of its romance by the knowledge that Parker sent a verbal message to the effect that the matter was left to Nelson's discretion.

By two o'clock the action was practically over, though some of the enemy ships were still firing. An

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armistice was agreed upon, Nelson consenting to land all the wounded Danes and to burn or remove his prizes. In taking out the ships three of them went ashore but were subsequently got off.

An opportunity to teach the Russians a lesson was not vouchsafed. Paul I was murdered, and with his death Russian policy underwent a complete change toward Great Britain. The castles in the air for the overthrow of British rule in India which the eccentric Czar and Napoleon had hoped to place on solid foundations disappeared as mist before the sun. Paul's successor, Alexander I, knowing full well the enormous importance of the British market for Russian goods, lost no time in coming to terms with England. Shortly afterward Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia followed his example. The much-boasted Maritime Confederacy was quietly relegated to the limbo of defeated schemes for the downfall of the great sea-Power.

In his dispatch to the Admiralty Parker paid a worthy tribute to Nelson, and added, "I have only to lament that the sort of attack, confined within an intricate and narrow passage, excluded the ships particularly under my command from the opportunity of exhibiting their valour; but I can with great truth assert, that the same spirit and zeal animated the whole of the Fleet; and I trust that the contest in which we were engaged, will on some future day afford them an occasion of showing that the whole were inspired with the same spirit, had the field been sufficiently extensive to have brought it into action."

On March 27, 1802, the Peace of Amiens was signed. Great Britain agreed to give up Egypt to the Sublime

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Porte; the Cape of Good Hope was made over to Holland, along with Berbice, Demerara, Essequibo, and Surinam; Malta was to be evacuated and restored to the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem; and all the French colonies taken in the war were to be returned. For these concessions Great Britain obtained Ceylon and Trinidad, France also agreeing to withdraw from Naples and the Roman States; Portugal was to be an independent kingdom, and the Newfoundland fisheries were to be on exactly the same footing as before the outbreak of war.

Speaking on the day on which the preliminaries of peace were laid before Parliament, Pitt emphasized his belief in the proverb, "In times of peace prepare for war." History has proved its truth, though there are some who argue that it is provocative. "The object," he stated, "which must naturally first present itself to every minister must be to give additional vigour to our maritime strength, and security to our colonial possessions. It was to them we were indebted for the unparalleled exertions which we have been enabled to make in the course of this long and eventful contest; it was by them that we were enabled, in the wreck of Europe, not only to effect our own security, but to hold out to our allies the means of safety, if they had been but true to themselves."

George III referred to the treaty as "an experimental peace." He was right. War broke out again in May 1803. Napoleon had then only five sail-of-the-line and ten frigates in home ports actually ready for immediate hostilities, while the fleets in being totalled but twenty-three battleships, twenty-seven frigates, and ninety-seven smaller vessels, including transports. The First Consul's finest ships were either

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in the Indian Ocean or at or about to leave San Domingo, Martinique, French Guiana, and Senegal. Of the Batavian navy of sixteen sail-of-the-line, six only were modern, six were in India or on the high seas, and the remainder were in bad condition.

Britain had no fewer than fifty-two battleships in actual service. Within twenty-four hours of the declaration of hostilities Cornwallis was ploughing the Channel to take up his station off Ushant to mask the Brest Fleet. Nelson commanded in the Mediterranean, Keith was in the Downs, Gardner at Portsmouth, and Montagu at Plymouth. From these fleets various squadrons were detached at different times to watch all ports in which the enemy had vessels, Pellew cruising off Ferrol, Collingwood off Rochefort, and Thornborough off the Texel. North America was guarded by Vice-Admiral Sir Andrew Mitchell, the East Indies by Vice-Admiral Peter Rainier, Jamaica by Rear-Admiral Sir J. T. Duckworth, and the Leeward Islands by Commodore Sir Samuel Hood. It was absolutely necessary to prevent the squadrons at Brest, Toulon, Rochefort, Ferrol, and in the Texel from putting to sea, or, to be strictly accurate, from escaping without giving fight. St Vincent was still at the head of the Admiralty, but unfortunately few of the vessels belonging to the various blockading and defence squadrons were in first-class condition. Nelson complained bitterly, even going so far as to state that some of them were unseaworthy. The furious gales played havoc with the ships, and the ships played havoc with the men.



THE "MONARCH"

CHAPTER XXII

Trafalgar

There never was such a combat since England had a fleet.

COLLINGWOOD

FOR two years Napoleon devoted much of his colossal energy to preparations for the invasion of England. An army of 130,000 troops was to cross in small boats convoyed by the Navy proper. His main difficulty, of course, was to concentrate his battleships, for unless they could elude the vigilance of Britain's naval policemen on the sea-beat outside their harbours or defeat them in open fight, no meeting at a general rendezvous was possible.

Napoleon's strategy, if somewhat involved, was deeply laid. The commanders at Rochefort and Toulon were to effect their escape and make for Martinique and Cayenne respectively. Having spread red ruin in the British West Indies, they were to unite, release the squadron at Ferrol, and return to Rochefort to threaten Cornwallis, who would thus be precluded from lending assistance elsewhere. Admiral Ganteaume at Brest was to play the chief part. He was to make a descent on Ireland while his colleagues were crossing the Atlantic and then cover the invading army from Boulogne.

In January 1805 Missiessy escaped from Rochefort, and a week later Villeneuve left Toulon. Nelson gave chase immediately information of these happenings

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came to hand. He sailed for Egypt, and off Malta learned that the Toulon Fleet had put back to port badly crippled. On March 30th Villeneuve made another start with eleven ships, his instructions being to release the Spanish squadron at Cadiz and then make for Martinique and unite with Missiessy. Ganteaume's fleet at Brest was to rally fifteen vessels at Ferrol, and also to proceed to the West Indies. The fifty-nine battleships thus congregated would recross the Atlantic and convoy the Boulogne flotilla to England.

Nelson scoured the Mediterranean without success, and then made for the West Indies. He touched at Barbados, Tobago, Trinidad, Grenada, Montserrat, and Antigua, sent a brig to inform the Admiralty of the probable return of the allied fleet to Europe, and, discerning the likelihood of Ferrol as an anchorage for the missing enemy, forwarded a warning to Sir Robert Calder.

After a perilous voyage Villeneuve, who had not effected a junction with Missiessy because the latter had not waited for him, was approaching Ferrol in thick weather on July 22nd, when he was confronted by the squadron of fifteen battleships and four smaller vessels which had been sent by the Admiralty to await his coming. The action which followed was anything but decisive. The fleet Nelson had longed to annihilate was allowed to escape by Calder, who captured a couple of Spanish sail-of-the-line.

Early in the morning of September 2nd Captain Blackwood brought news to Nelson that Villeneuve, largely augmented, was at Cadiz. Nelson was then at Merton Place, after having been absent from home twenty-seven months and chased the enemy nearly

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7,000 miles. He hoisted his flag on the *Victory* (100) as commander-in-chief, his force consisting of twenty-seven battleships, four frigates, a schooner, and a cutter. The allied French and Spanish fleet was stronger by six sail-of-the-line, though the total British broadside was only 1,000 lb. less. Their mission was to support Napoleon's army in the south of Italy, for the invasion plan had been abandoned and the Austerlitz campaign substituted.

On October 21st the two fleets sighted each other. Villeneuve signalled his ships to form in line of battle on the port tack. Many of them missed their station, and there were several gaps and groups of ships along the line instead of vessels at regular intervals. The newly formed line was consequently very irregular and almost crescent-shaped. Villeneuve, prudent to a fault, wished to have Cadiz harbour under his lee; he was apparently already lending his mind to thoughts of disaster. Gravina, the Spanish admiral, with twelve reserve ships, instead of keeping to windward of the line, so that he might bring succour to Villeneuve if need should arise, prolonged the line to the rear. Dumanoir Le Pelley fell to leeward and formed a rear squadron of ten ships.

The British fleet was formed into two columns, twelve ships following the *Victory*, and fifteen in the rear of the *Royal Sovereign* (100), under Collingwood. Nelson's idea was to bear down upon the enemy with these two divisions and break the centre of the combined fleet in two places at once, himself leading the weather line, and Collingwood the lee.

At about noon the first shot was fired. It came from a French ship. The *Royal Sovereign*, with the *Belleisle* (74), *Mars* (74), and *Tonnant* (80) just behind

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her, forged ahead. Nelson had signalled Collingwood to break the enemy's line at the twelfth ship from the rear, but on seeing that she was only a two-decker Collingwood changed his course and steered straight for the *Santa Anna*, a huge Spanish ship of 112 guns flying Alava's flag. The *Fougueux* (74) then came up and endeavoured to prevent Collingwood from getting through the line. This caused the English admiral to order his captain to make a target of the bowsprit of the Frenchman and steer straight for it. Fortunately for the enemy she altered her course, but although she saved herself she did not prevent the *Royal Sovereign* from breaking the line.

A broadside and a half tore down the huge stern gallery of the *Santa Anna*. Both ships were soon in a pitiable condition, but they hugged each other in a last desperate struggle. A terrific cannonade ensued, the *Fougueux* and the *San Leandro* (64) raking the *Royal Sovereign*, and the *San Justo* (74) and the *Indomptable* (80) lending their assistance some distance away. Some fifteen or twenty minutes after Collingwood had maintained the unequal contest alone, several British ships came up and paid attention to those of the enemy which had gone to Alava's assistance. At about 2.15 p.m. the mammoth *Santa Anna* struck her flag.

Nelson, steering more to the north so as to cut off the enemy's way of retreat to Cadiz, came up about half an hour after Collingwood had begun the engagement. As the stately flagship entered the zone of fire a number of Villeneuve's vessels poured a perfect avalanche of shot upon her decks. The wheel was smashed, a topmast dropped on the deck, and one of the launches was struck.

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Steering for the *Santissima Trinidad* (130), at that time the biggest floating arsenal ever built in Europe, Nelson sought to engage her, but an alteration in position prevented this, and he tackled the *Bucentaure* (80), Villeneuve's flagship. Crash went the 68-pdr. carronade into the Frenchman, and down came the greater part of the *Bucentaure's* stern. The *Victory* then grappled with the *Redoutable* (74), at the same time receiving a hurricane of fire from the French *Neptuno* (80).

Up in the fighting-tops of the *Redoutable* were riflemen trying to pick off the officers of the *Victory*. One marksman, a little keener-sighted or more fortunately placed than the others, saw Nelson walking up and down with Hardy. There was a flash of fire, a sharp crack as the bullet sped through the air, and the master-mariner of Britain, of the world, of all time, fell in a heap upon the deck.

For a short period the *Redoutable* did not return the *Victory's* fire, and thinking that the enemy was about to surrender the guns of the flagship also kept silence. But the interval had been used for another purpose. The French crew were swarming over the bulwarks of the *Victory*. A desperate resistance was offered, and Captain Adair was killed as well as eighteen marines and eighteen seamen. Help came from a sister ship. The *Téméraire* (98) was now astern of the *Redoutable*. She swept the decks with death. No fewer than 522 of the *Redoutable's* crew fell before she struck her colours.

The *Bucentaure* and the *Santissima Trinidad* were together throughout the battle and received a succession of attacks from various ships until they surrendered. Both of them were then little more

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than dismantled hulks. Villeneuve fought with the strength of despair, but no assistance came to him despite his frantic efforts to attract attention. Other ships hauled down their flags as the day wore on, the *Algéçiras* (74) to the *Tonnant* (80), the *Swiftsure* (74), and the *Bahama* (74) to the *Colossus* (74), the *San Juan Nepomuceno* (74) to the *Dreadnought* (98). Eighteen ships of the allied fleet were captured; one, the *Achille* (74), blew up with a terrific explosion.

At 5 p.m. Gravina made the signal for retreat. The eleven ships that followed him got away. Another four under Dumanoir also escaped, only to be captured off Cape Ortegal by Sir Richard Strachan.

Three of the prizes escaped in a gale that followed the battle, and entered Cadiz harbour, two of them having been retaken by Cosmao Kerjulien, who put to sea with that object in view and lost three of his own ships over the transaction. Only four Trafalgar prizes were saved.

Collingwood gave the number of prisoners as 20,000, and the monetary loss of the enemy nearly £4,000,000, "most of it gone to the bottom." The British loss was 1,690 killed and wounded; that of the allies 5,860, although exact figures are not obtainable. The total armament of the English vessels numbered 2,148 guns, while the French had 1,356 and the Spanish 1,270, bringing the combined force to 2,626. Whereas the British succeeded in firing a gun nearly once a minute, it took three minutes for the allied fleet to do so.

Great Britain gained enormously in prestige as a result of Nelson's overwhelming victory. Among other important consequences, Trafalgar led Napoleon to enforce his disastrous Continental System, by means

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of which he hoped to exclude the goods of his persistent enemy from the Continent. This, in its turn, brought on the war with Russia, a big step toward the final catastrophe of Waterloo.

After Trafalgar Napoleon used his maritime resources entirely for commerce-raiding. In the December following the battle two squadrons, under Willaumez and Leissègues respectively, escaped from Brest, and Sir John Warren and Sir Richard Strachan set off in pursuit. Willaumez and his six ships also eluded Duckworth, who was off Cadiz, and at Martinique was equally fortunate in escaping from Cochrane. Yet when he returned to France he had but a sorry tale to tell, for while he had taken seventeen British merchantmen, he had lost two French battleships. Leissègues was met by Duckworth off San Domingo, and though he put up a spirited fight his five sail-of-the-line were outmatched by his opponent's eight. All his big ships were either taken or destroyed, the smaller fry alone escaping. In 1806 Commodore Sir Home Popham, with troops under Sir David Baird, attacked and captured Cape Town, and Hood secured five French frigates off Rochefort.

Two important expeditions were undertaken in 1807. With seven battleships Duckworth forced the Dardanelles and anchored in the Sea of Marmora, where he delayed instead of proceeding to bombard Constantinople. Quite naturally the Turks set to work to strengthen their defences, and the Admiral turned tail, many of the ships suffering severely from stone shot. An attack was also made on Egypt, but although Alexandria was taken, defeat awaited the British at Rosetta, and the Land of the Pharaohs was evacuated.

A secret article of the Treaty of Tilsit, signed by

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Napoleon and the Czar in July 1807, was to the effect that should Sweden refuse to close her ports to England and to declare war against her, Denmark would be compelled to fight the former. This was to take effect if negotiations for peace between Great Britain and Russia failed. Canning, our Foreign Minister, was not correctly informed, and believed that the arrangement was to come into force immediately. Determined not to be forestalled, England proposed that Denmark should hand over her fleet until a general peace was proclaimed—a proposition that the Prince Royal refused to entertain.

An army of 27,000 strong under Lord Cathcart sailed from Yarmouth convoyed by Admiral Gambier, who had fought with Howe and been commander-in-chief of the Newfoundland Squadron and governor of the colony. The bombardment of Copenhagen began on September 2nd and ended on the 5th, when the British took possession of the citadel and arsenals. The fleet was surrendered and taken to England the following month.

Until the final abdication of Napoleon the British Navy was constantly at its constrictive work. It had no rest. It supported Wellington in the Peninsular War and our allies in Belgium, fought the United States on the question of the right of search, blockaded the Russian fleet, kept an eye on Sweden, convoyed the ill-fated Walcheren expedition, and remorselessly attacked enemy possessions. Santa Lucia, Demerara, Tobago, Surinam, Curaçoa, Cape Colony, Désirade, Marie Galante, Martinique, Cayenne, Guadeloupe, St Martin, Saba, St Eustatius, Amboyna, Banda Neira, Bourbon, Mauritius, Java, and Senegal were swept into its net. It was not always successful,

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of course, and the blockades were not quite so rigid as they might have been, but while a French squadron revictualled Corfu and Gambier failed through lack of energy in his attack upon Brest, while 5,314 British merchantmen were captured between 1803 and 1814 against 440 French privateers taken by England, Sea-Power played its tremendous part in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. It was to Captain Maitland of H.M.S. *Bellerophon*—a Trafalgar ship—that the fallen Emperor surrendered on July 15, 1815.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Coming of Steam and Iron

The outstanding lesson of history is that an insular Power can never be crushed so long as it retains command of the sea.

DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH

OF the arrears of work that remained for the Navy to clear up after the fall of Napoleon the most important was to rid the seas of marauders. Barbary corsairs and Algerine pirates did not merely confine their attentions to the Mediterranean; they had committed depredations in the English Channel. As in the time of Elizabeth, Christians were languishing in the pestilential dungeons of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. While Lord Exmouth—formerly Sir Edward Pellew—secured the release of many of these poor fellows in the Barbary States, and also the abolition of slavery, the Dey of Algiers remained openly defiant.

With six British sail-of-the-line and a Dutch squadron of five frigates and smaller vessels, Exmouth arrived off Algiers on August 27, 1816, and the bombardment of the protecting mole began. The enemy batteries and guns replied with fervour. Nearly 900 casualties were sustained by the allies, but the Admiral did his work thoroughly. A portion of the mole was levelled, much of the Algerine shipping was set ablaze, and the defenders lost several thousand men as well as many vessels of their flotilla. Some 50,000 rounds

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were fired by the attacking ships before Exmouth withdrew for the night. The Dey was evidently satisfied with his peppering, for he conceded all demands.

Although Greece openly rebelled against Turkish tyranny in 1821, it was not until six years later that Britain, France, and Russia announced their intention to enforce a solution of the problem. The idea of the allies was that while Greece should govern herself, she should also be under Turkish suzerainty. To ensure the cessation of hostilities Codrington, supported by a French and a Russian squadron, was sent to Navarino Bay, where the Turco-Egyptian fleet was lying. It was thought that this display of force would overawe Ibrahim Pasha, but when fire was opened by one of the Turco-Egyptian vessels the action speedily became general. The result was summed up in a single brief sentence by Codrington: "Out of a fleet composed of 81 men-of-war, only one frigate and 15 smaller vessels are in a state ever to again put to sea." In the subsequent King's Speech at the opening of Parliament the battle was referred to as an "untoward event," and Codrington was recalled. Right or wrong, the action was successful, for Greece secured her independence.

The Navy, like the Church, is inherently conservative. It fought the coming of steam with bitter and determined opposition. Melville, who was First Lord in 1804-5, although a reformer in many ways, regarded it as the duty of the Admiralty to "discourage to the utmost of their ability the employment of steam-vessels, as they considered the introduction of steam was calculated to strike a fatal blow to the naval supremacy of the Empire." In the opposite camp

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was Nelson's Hardy, who in 1839 declared, "You will see great changes in naval architecture. Some people laugh at science, but science will alter the whole character of the Navy; depend upon it, steam and gunnery are in their infancy." It took many years for the evolution to be accomplished. Only at the beginning of the twentieth century was the last of the sailing-brigs used for training towed to its last home. Even so late as 1860 a royal commission recommended fortifications "as a cheap substitute for the requisite minimum of naval strength to ensure security."

In 1786 John Fitch built a steamer worked by paddles which navigated the Delaware River. Two years later Miller and Symington carried out experiments with a steamer in Scotland. In 1800 Henry Bell built a small steamer on the Clyde, and in 1811 his famous *Comet* was running. Twelve months before Waterloo steamers were churning the waters of the same river, and in 1816 they were also running on the Thames and the Mersey. The *Monkey*, a paddle-tug of some 212 tons and 80 horse-power, was actually the first steam-vessel in the service. It was built about 1821 and purchased in 1823. A little later the *Lightning* was added to the Navy List.

When in 1839 Britain supported the Sultan of Turkey in his quarrel with Mehemet Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, Vice-Admiral Sir Robert Stopford had at his command twelve sail-of-the-line, six frigates, nine smaller vessels, and half a dozen steamers. The campaign is chiefly notable for the first appearance of the last-mentioned in actual warfare, but it is also interesting by reason of the fact that Commodore Charles Napier, second in command, led the land-forces when

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the colonel was laid aside by illness. Sidon fell after a vigorous attack by land and sea, Beyrout was captured, and Acre shared a similar fate.

This war was not over when trouble broke out with China over a long list of grievances, which included smuggling and the non-payment of debts. The *Volage* and the *Hyacinth* fought and defeated the Chinese fleet, calling forth an imperial edict that henceforth trade with England was stopped for ever. The blockade of the Canton River by Commodore Sir George Bremer was followed by military movements against Chusan and an attack on the Canton forts. The bad faith of the Chinese Government led to further trouble in 1841, when Rear-Admiral Sir William Parker took a number of vessels up the Yangtze-kiang to Nankin. This had the desired effect of making the Emperor sue for peace. Canton, Amoy, Ningpo, Shanghai, and Foochow were recognized as trading or 'treaty' ports, and Hong-Kong was ceded to Britain.

Paddle-steamers proved their usefulness in the battle of Obligado, November 20, 1845, during the strife between Brazil and Buenos Ayres for the possession of Paraguay and Uruguay. Britain and France, having commercial interests in South America, sent squadrons which navigated the river Parana, the steamers enfilading the forts and preparing the way for the heavier ships after a boom of empty vessels had been disposed of. Landing-parties then proceeded to storm and destroy the defences. The steamers led the van in the subsequent attack on San Lorenzo with complete success.

Part of Burma was already British, having passed into our possession at the close of the Burmese War

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in 1826. A little over a quarter of a century later, as the consequence of a series of insults and crimes, hostilities again broke out. A squadron under Commodore Lambert appeared off Rangoon, and all Burmese ports were blockaded. On January 9, 1852, the *Fox* (40), towed by a steamer, was fired upon, with the result that the whole of the squadron took up the challenge with disastrous effects on the enemy's works and war-galleys. Several weeks later troops were embarked on steamers and other vessels, and Admiral Austen with nineteen men-of-war, frigates, steamers, and gunboats, together with seven small steamers of the Bengal Marine, anchored off the capital. Sailing up the Rangoon River, the fleet exacted heavy retribution on Easter Sunday; the stockades were stormed, and several magazines blown up. The dose was repeated on the following morning, the fortified pagoda being the main object of attack. The bombardment was continued throughout the night, and on the 14th, assisted by the heavy howitzers of the naval brigade, the temple-fortress was stormed and captured. Lambert had already assisted in the taking of Bassein, some 150 miles west of Rangoon. This officer succeeded Austen on the Admiral's death. It was thanks mainly to his energy that the steamers were able to do excellent work on the inland waterways.

The first screw-warship in the British Navy was the *Rattler*, built of wood and launched in 1841. The pioneer iron steamship for the service was the *Trident*, of 1,850 tons and 300 horse-power, built in 1843. The first British sea-going ironclad, the *Warrior*, was launched in December 1860 and completed in 1861. It was not an invention of the Navy, but a reply to the French *La Gloire*, for England was going through

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one of her periodic phases of naval panic. A contemporary describes the French vessel as "a two-decked wooden ship, with her upper deck removed and her masts greatly reduced, the weight thus got rid of permitting a casing of $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch armour-plating fore and aft, the entire vessel being thus protected, and carrying thirty-four heavy rifled guns."

In masts and rigging the *Warrior* exactly resembled the old wooden frigates. She was armoured in the middle main-deck battery only, with an armoured bulkhead at each end, her bow and stern being unprotected. The armour was of the uniform thickness of $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, backed by 18 inches of teak and a skin-plating of $\frac{5}{8}$ inch. Her most powerful guns, twenty-six of which were carried in the central battery, thirteen on each side, were the old smooth-bore 95-cwt. 68-pdrs., no heavier than the biggest used at Trafalgar. The *Warrior's* displacement was about 9,210 tons, her coal capacity 800 tons, and the screw was made to lift so as not to impede her sailing qualities when steam was not required. Her actual speed was 12 knots. The price of this forefather of the battle-cruiser *Hood* was a mere £385,188, against the £6,025,000 spent on the latter, which costs approximately £617,410 per annum to keep in full commission in home waters. Capital ships now on the stocks are likely to incur an expenditure of £9,000,000 each.

The transition from wood to iron was by no means speedy. The flagship of Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier, commander-in-chief in the Baltic in the war with Russia in 1854, was the *Duke of Wellington* (130), a wooden three-decker fitted with sails and a screw. By an eleventh-hour decision the Admiralty determined to install engines, and she was cut in two and

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made 20 feet longer for the purpose. Originally intended to be called the *Windsor Castle*, the vessel was launched on the day the victor of Waterloo died, and by Queen Victoria's request was christened the *Duke of Wellington*. Her displacement was 6,071 tons, and it is on record that she was built out of an oak-forest covering seventy-six acres, each tree being not less than 200 years old. It was not until the centenary year of Trafalgar that this stately ship, which led the line in the Spithead Review of 1853, passed into the hands of the breakers.

Of the eighteen battleships at Napier's disposal a dozen were steam, as were the twenty-three frigates, corvettes, and sloops. Sailing from England in March, they were joined in June by a French squadron under Vice-Admiral Deschesnes, who had with him eight sailing-battleships and a number of frigates. The Russians had less than a dozen steamers and no steam-battleships.

Leaving a considerable portion of his force on guard should the Russian fleet come out, Napier landed 9,000 troops after a preliminary bombardment of Bomarsund, in the Aland Islands. Exposed to fire from land and sea, the four forts speedily surrendered. It was not the French but the British who kept guard until the ice blockaded the enemy. In the succeeding August Sveaborg was attacked by Admiral Dundas, mainly with mortar-ships and gunboats.

In the Crimea the sea-communications of the allies were not threatened. In the Black Sea, at the beginning of 1854, the British fleet consisted of ten battleships, of which eight were sail, and one sail and six paddle-frigates, while the French had eight battleships, only one of which was not propelled solely

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by wind, and four small paddle-steamers. These forces were considerably augmented later, mostly by steam-driven ships. Russia had but fourteen sail-of-the-line, a number of frigates and brigs, and a dozen steamers at her disposal. In the long-protracted siege of Sebastopol the senior service played a worthy part. A naval brigade and marines did excellent work on land, and their colleagues on the ships ably supported them. Many of the Russian ships were scuttled across the harbour. In the bombardment of October 17, 1854, the steamers proved their superiority by towing the sailers in and out of action. The attack was far less successful than had been hoped. The *Albion*, the *London*, and the *Arethusa* had to be hauled out of action owing to damages sustained, the *Agamemnon* struck a shoal, and the *Rodney* was badly damaged. All, with the exception of the *Agamemnon*, which was the first battleship designed for a screw, were sailing-ships. The final bombardment took place on September 5, 6, and 7, 1855, and on the 8th Sebastopol fell. In the attack on Fort Kimburn, guarding the Dnieper, in the following October, four French floating batteries of 1,400 tons, driven by screws and mounting eighteen 50-pdrs. protected with 4-inch iron plating, were tried with great success. These somewhat unseaworthy vessels were the direct progenitors of *La Gloire*, about which mention has already been made.

The unchallenged supremacy of the allies at sea made the invasion of the Crimea and the siege of Sebastopol possible, and the naval operations in the Baltic not only hemmed in the Russian fleet there, but forced the Czar to keep a numerous army in the north when it was urgently needed in the south.

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The seizure of a ship alleged to be flying the British flag again brought war in China in 1856, and Admiral Sir Edward Seymour, after capturing the Canton forts, threw shells into the city. France now joined Britain, and the allied fleets destroyed the Taku forts guarding the entrance to the Peiho River. Peace was patched up, but the behaviour of the Chinese Government speedily proved that they regarded it as merely a measure to gain time. The Taku forts were rebuilt, and when attacked in 1859 involved the defeat of the force and the loss of three gunboats. In the autumn of the following year the allies were more successful—Pekin was attacked, and hostilities ceased.

War broke out with Japan in 1863, Admiral Kuper's first operation being the destruction of three steamers forming the nucleus of the Prince of Satsuma's navy. He then proceeded to shell the shore batteries of Kagoshima. Scarcely had the attack begun than a typhoon set in. For six hours the men plied their guns, despite the weather, and indulged in much erratic shooting. The city, which boasted a population of some 180,000, was almost burned to the ground.

The Lord of Satsuma had learned his lesson. In the following year another feudal prince, Le of Nagato, fired on warships and merchantmen passing through the Strait of Shimonoseki. An international squadron of British, French, Dutch, and United States vessels under Kuper—now Sir Augustus—attacked the batteries within range of the naval guns, and landed some 1,800 men to assault the others. Complete success attended the operation, and peace was purchased at a price of 3,000,000 dollars.

It was not very long before the thickness of the

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armour carried by the *Warrior's* successors was increased to $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and placed both fore and aft in addition to amidships. In the *Hercules* of 1868 the armour was 9 inches at the water-line, an inch less on the most important parts of the broadside, and 6 inches on the remainder. What was called the 'ram-bow' also made its appearance. This vessel mounted eight 18-ton guns in the central battery; these threw projectiles weighing 400 lb., and were the most powerful ever mounted on the broadside up to that time. In the protected batteries at the bow and stern two 12-ton guns were placed, and there were four unprotected $6\frac{1}{2}$ -ton guns on the upper deck.

In the earlier classes of ironclad it was found that their length made them somewhat unhandy. It was therefore determined to build vessels of more moderate proportions. The first of these was the *Bellerophon*, which was 80 feet shorter than the *Warrior*, protected throughout, and having a central and a bow battery on the main deck.

The historic fight between the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor* in the American Civil War of 1860 hastened another step in evolution. The former was a Federal wooden steam-frigate of 60 guns which had been cut down to within two feet of the water-line, a superstructure of armour-plating pierced at intervals for the guns erected on it, and an iron ram provided. She carried a 7-inch gun at bow and stern, and six 9-inch and two 6-inch guns in the broadside. The *Monitor* was protected by iron $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick and mounted a revolving turret in which were two 11-inch smooth-bore guns. "The *Monitor*," says an eyewitness, "went round the *Merrimac* repeatedly, probing her sides, seeking for weak points, and reserving

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her fire with coolness, until she had the right spot and the right range, and made her experiments accordingly. In this way the *Merrimac* received three shots. . . . Neither of these three shots rebounded at all, but appeared to cut their way clear through iron and wood into the ship." After a five hours' action the *Merrimac* turned tail. Although Erricsson claimed to be the inventor of the *Monitor*, the idea apparently originated with Captain Cowper Coles, of the British Navy. He had proposed it to the Admiralty in 1855, and a description of the ship had appeared in 1860 in an English magazine circulating largely in America.

It was decided to convert the *Royal Sovereign*, a recently built three-decker of 4,000 tons displacement and 800 horse-power. At Portsmouth she was cut down to her lower deck, and an additional sum of £150,431 spent on her. Coles' system of turrets was adopted, her sides being covered with $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches of rolled iron. Her armament consisted of five 250-pdrs. in four centre-line turrets, and her speed was about 11 knots.

The experience gained in the behaviour of the *Royal Sovereign* was utilized in the iron-built turret-ship *Monarch*, the thickness of the armour varying from 6 inches to 7 inches. Her length was 330 feet, her breadth 57 feet 6 inches, and her freeboard 14 feet, as against the *Royal Sovereign's* 6 feet. In her sister ship, the *Captain*, the freeboard was again reduced to 6 feet. She capsized in a gale in the Bay of Biscay in September 1870, the general consensus of opinion being that in order to keep up with the *Monarch* she had crowded on too much sail. "The desire of our Admiralty," wrote Admiral Sherard Osborn, "to make all their fighting-ships cruise under

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canvas, as well as steam, induced poor Captain Coles to go a step further, and to make a ship with a low freeboard a sailing-ship." The inventor went down with the vessel, together with a son of the First Lord and 600 officers and men. In her turrets the *Captain* carried 25-ton guns throwing 600-lb. projectiles.

In the turret-ships *Thunderer* and *Devastation*, designed in 1869, sails were discarded, 10-, 12-, and 14-inch armour was used, and guns of 35 and 38 tons appeared. In that year their designer, Mr E. J. Reed, stated that "the Admiralty acted wisely in suspending the construction of wooden line-of-battle ships and frigates when the expediency of building ironclads became apparent; but the action at Lissa¹ shows that wooden ships are far from ineffective in engagements where ironclads are present, and there can be little doubt that the value of such ships as a reserve would be very great, since the first ironclad action would greatly cripple the armoured ships of the enemy, and give scope for the operations of the wooden fleet."

These ships were both of 9,330 tons displacement. The *Thunderer* was armed with two 38-ton (12·5-inch) guns and two 35-ton (12-inch) guns in two turrets, whereas all four guns of the *Devastation* were of 35 tons. They were provided with a 'protective' deck of armour to shield the engines and magazines, and a curved superstructure between the two turrets on which was a hurricane-deck where the conning-tower was situated. These ships had a single mast for look-out and signalling purposes.

Progress and retrogression are noticeable in the *Inflexible*, of 11,880 tons, the glory of the Navy in 1881. Her two turrets both carried two muzzle-loading

¹ Fought between Austria and Italy in 1866.

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80-ton guns firing a shot weighing 1,700 lb. Round the citadel amidships the wrought-iron protection was no less than two feet thick, but both ends were left unprotected, as in the *Warrior*, and she carried sails. To counterbalance her deficiency in armour at bow and stern the ship was divided into a great number of so-called 'watertight' compartments. All four guns could be fired ahead or astern. To this armament eight 4-inch breech-loaders were added subsequently. One who sailed in her asserts that when her canvas was spread in a strong breeze she was "completely unmanageable." At the bombardment of Alexandria, when she was under the command of Captain J. A. Fisher, her guns played havoc with the Egyptian forts. While one turret was bombarding Fort Mex, the other was shelling the Ras-el-Tin batteries to such excellent effect that Admiral Seymour signalled "Well done, *Inflexible*!" The *Condor*, although justly famous, was not the only ship that deserved well of the nation and of the Navy that day. Incidentally the turret-ship sustained more damage than any other unit of the fleet. She was designed by Sir Nathaniel Barnaby, K.C.B., Director of Naval Construction.

During the eighties the 'Admiral' class came into being and marked another departure. The guns which they mounted at bow and stern were in barbettes and not in turrets, and there was a secondary armament of six or ten 6-inch breech-loading and smaller guns amidships. The guns revolved on a turn-table, the gunners being afforded protection by an armoured hood. Of the half-dozen 'Admirals' built between 1882 and 1886, one had two 12-inch guns in each barrette, four had 13·5-inch guns, and the *Benbow* had a single 16·5-inch 110-ton gun mounted at each



THE "INFLEXIBLE" IN EGYPTIAN WATERS



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end. In 1887 the *Victoria* was launched at Newcastle-on-Tyne from Armstrong's yard, with a displacement of 10,470 tons and a speed of 16 knots. Barbettes had gone out of fashion; two 110-ton guns projected from a single turret forward and one 29-ton gun from a turret aft. The auxiliary armament abaft the turret and above the upper deck consisted of twelve 6-inch, twelve 6-pdr. rapid-fire, twelve 3-pdr. rapid-fire, and eight Nordenfeldt guns. There were also eight torpedo-tubes. This fine ship was rammed by the *Camperdown* off the coast of Tripoli in June 1893, and sank in about ten minutes. The commander of the *Victoria* was John Jellicoe, later commander-in-chief of the Grand Fleet from 1914 to 1916.

The remaining naval actions of the nineteenth century, so far as Britain was concerned, were of no great significance. In the spring of 1877 the Peruvian revolutionist Pierola, having seized a man-of-war and coaled at the expense of an English merchant vessel, was promptly searched for by Admiral de Horsey. On discovery an inconclusive fight ensued, thanks mainly to the armour protection of the *Huascar*, for her gunnery was atrocious, and she made her escape, though only to fall to a Peruvian squadron.

Of land-campaigns in which sailors have played a part as well as soldiers there have been a goodly few. In the sixties a naval brigade was engaged in subduing the native Maori of New Zealand, and seamen under Captain Fellows bore a good deal of the heat and burden of the day in the long agony of the Abyssinian expedition of 1868 against King Theodore, which ended in the capture of Magdala. Nearly 300 officers and men also took part in Wolseley's advance on

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Coomassie in the Ashanti affair of 1873-4, the commander-in-chief testifying to the "dashing courage" of the seamen and marines. A smaller naval contingent likewise assisted in the Zulu War of 1878-9. Following the disaster at Isandula, further military and naval reinforcements were sent out, and Cetywayo was defeated.

A flotilla of steamers capable of navigating the Irawadi was called into active service in the short Burmese War of 1885, when some 200 miles of difficult waterway was skilfully navigated. In the following year a naval patrol of the same river successfully put down a native rebellion.

Splendid work was done by another naval brigade in 1890 in punishing the Sultan of Vitu, a dusky magnate of East Africa who had murdered a number of Europeans. With Vice-Admiral Sir E. R. Fremantle in command, the expedition advanced through extremely difficult country and exacted heavy retribution by destroying the Sultan's capital and blowing up his palace. Admiral Sir Harry Rawson undertook a similar operation, for an almost identical crime, against the bloodthirsty King of Benin in 1897. Though on a larger scale and attended by even greater difficulties, the affair was triumphantly settled in a little over a month.

In the war against the Mahdi in the Sudan in 1884-5 a naval brigade fought in the battles of El Teb and Tamaai. It was during the former battle that Lord Charles Beresford (later Lord Beresford) escaped death only because he was knocked down by the enemy and fell under the Gardner gun which he and another man were endeavouring to bring into action. Wilson, Stuart-Wortley, and Beresford, it will be remembered,

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set out with four steamers on a last desperate dash to rescue Gordon. Men-of-war in the harbour at Suakin gave valuable assistance in preventing Osman Digna from carrying his siege of the town to a successful issue. On December 20, 1888, Kitchener fought the battle of Gemaizeh. In order to deceive the enemy a naval demonstration was made a few miles from Suakin, at a place called Mersa Kuwai, which was visible from Osman Digna's headquarters at Handub. As Osman Digna sent no reinforcements, it must be presumed that this feint had the desired effect of making him uncertain as to where Sir Francis Grenfell, the Sirdar, would strike his main blow. At the same time a heavy artillery bombardment of the dervish position, both from the forts and H.M.S. *Racer*, was kept up. Over 500 dervishes—a little less than a third of those who took part—were slain, including four ameer.

During the Dongola campaign stern-wheel steamers, some of which were converted into miniature gunboats by being armed, acted as tugs for smaller vessels carrying troops and stores to Wady Halfa, the point of concentration. An engagement at Hafir was practically a contest between the artillery on either side and the little flotilla of gunboats, the *Tamaai*, the *Abu Klea*, and the *Metammeh*, under Commander the Hon. S. C. J. Colville, R.N. The enemy evacuated the position, taking their guns with them, but their steamboat—formerly one of Gordon's little fleet—was sunk.

In the light of more recent history it is interesting to note that the commander of the *Abu Klea* was Lieutenant David Beatty. When Colville was wounded this young officer took over the command

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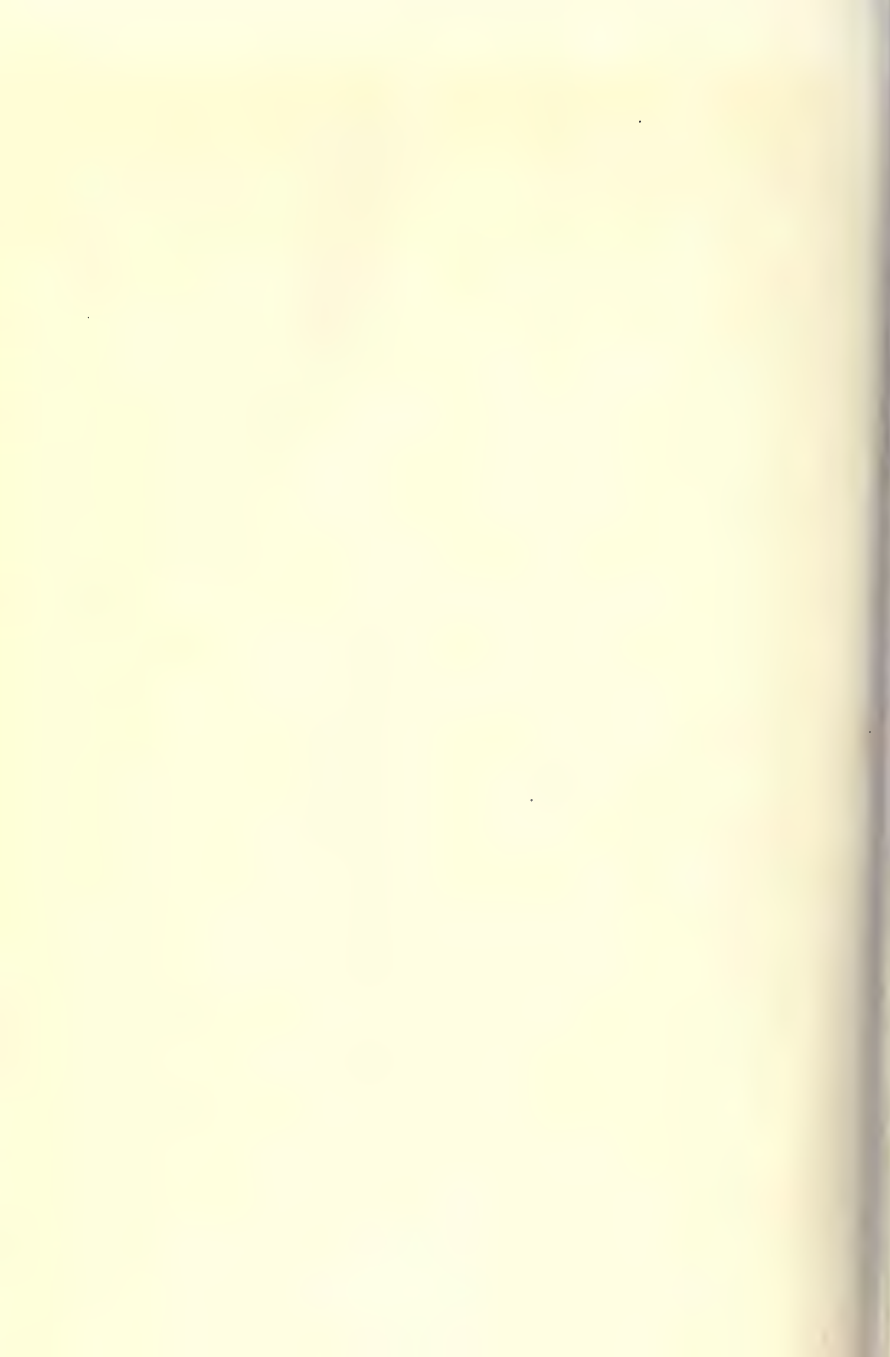
of the flotilla and played his part with marked ability and bravery. When Kitchener had got the upper hand the vessels steamed toward Dongola, the fight continuing intermittently until dawn on the following morning, when the enemy decamped and Kitchener's army crossed the river. The forts and batteries of Dongola were destroyed by the gunboats. When the last great lump of mud crumbled and disappeared in a cloud of dust it was a sign that the Nile valley had been restored to the rule of the Khedive.

At the battle of the Atbara Beatty was in command of the rocket-battery which set many of the thatched huts ablaze in the enemy's zariba. A few months later the flotilla, after silencing the forts of Halfiyeh, ran the gauntlet of those of Khartoum and Omdurman. On September 2, 1898, thirteen years after his death, Gordon was avenged. The gunboats bombarded the Khalifa's capital, and throughout the day were in constant service, in particular covering the Camel Corps at a very critical period.

Less than a week after his triumphal entry into Omdurman Kitchener was informed that Fashoda, on the White Nile, had been occupied by a force of white men and black soldiers. The Sirdar set out to investigate, taking with him five steamers, soldiers, and guns. He found M. Marchand and 128 men, the commander claiming the territory as French. Thanks to Lord Salisbury's firmness the claim was not upheld, though for a time it looked as though war would break out between Britain and the Republic.

Returning to the material evolution of the Navy, progress had been made in other types of vessel besides the battleship. In the Diamond Jubilee





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Naval Review of 1897 no ship received more notice than the *Powerful*, a steel-built first-class cruiser of 14,200 tons with the speed of an Atlantic liner. Her sister ship the *Terrible* was not commissioned until nearly a year later. The *Powerful* was then on the China station hourly expecting that Britain would be involved in the Russo-Japanese War. That crisis past, she went to Manila to watch the nation's interests during the Spanish-American War, and was preparing to leave Hong-Kong when the Fashoda affair seemed likely to involve the Empire with France. In 1899 she proceeded to the Cape and landed troops from Mauritius to take part in the South African War. At Simon's Bay she sent a Naval Brigade on shore. Captain Percy Scott, of the *Terrible*, hastily designed a mounting for 4.7 guns, which with others were procured for the defence of Durban, and another Naval Brigade was landed. From Durban the cruiser sailed for China, where the Boxer Rebellion was in full swing, and again the Naval Brigade did magnificent work.

Another factor in warfare was the torpedo. The late Mr Robert Whitehead's invention, an improvement on that of Commander Lupuis, of the Austrian Navy, who had sold his patent to the former, was tested by the British Admiralty at Sheerness in 1871. Although it was extremely crude when compared with its successor of to-day, the sum of £15,000 was paid for the English rights. It was first put to a practical demonstration in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877, when Lieutenant Rozhdestvensky, who afterward suffered defeat at the hands of the Japanese in 1905, sank a Turkish warship by its means. The first torpedo-boat built for the British Navy was the *Lightning*,

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a little ship of 27 tons with a speed of 18 knots launched in 1877. The torpedo-boat destroyers of to-day have a displacement of over 1,800 tons, are propelled by turbine engines, use oil fuel, and can attain a speed of over forty miles an hour.

In 1889 Lord Salisbury emphasized the enormous importance of the British Navy by insisting that it should be equal to that of the two strongest foreign Powers, but it was not until 1895-98 that it became in any real sense worthy of the term 'modern.'

Following the Russo-Japanese War, we took to heart the maxim of our Eastern allies, "Let the victor look to the laces of his helmet." During Sir John Fisher's administration as First Sea Lord (1904-10), the British Navy underwent a complete transformation. Believing that concentration was the keynote of successful warfare, he boldly reduced the Mediterranean Fleet in order to strengthen that in the North Sea, which he held to be the main strategic theatre. Germany, and not France, was the menace. He reformed Osborne, accentuating the importance of the engineering branch of the sea-profession, developed the submarine, fathered the sea-plane, adopted the water-tube boiler, the turbine, and oil fuel, and introduced the Dreadnought type of battleship and the battle-cruiser. Fisher cut down expenses without in any way reducing the efficiency of the fleets, turned out old-fashioned ships, and reorganized the whole service.

The *Dreadnought* was laid down at Portsmouth in October 1905—the month and year of the centenary of Trafalgar—and commissioned late in 1906. A great deal of secrecy was wisely observed regarding the all-big-gun vessel, with the result that Germany

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was puzzled, as it was intended she should be, for it virtually made other types of battleships obsolete. Speed, armament, and armour-protection were combined in such a way as to introduce a new fashion. Her ten 12-inch guns were so arranged that eight could be used for firing a broadside, an enormous advance on the armament of the biggest battleship of other countries, none of which could bring to bear more than four big guns on a target. Since then many developments have taken place, the Dreadnoughts of the *Queen Elizabeth* class mounting eight 15-inch guns in four turrets, with a secondary armament of 6-inch guns, and displacing 27,500 tons of water. There has also been a marked increase in speed. The *Hood*, which was first commissioned in 1920, has a displacement of 41,200 tons, a speed of 31 knots, mounts eight 15-inch, twelve 5·5-inch, and four anti-aircraft guns, and has six torpedo-tubes. She is heavily armoured, the main belt being twelve inches thick, and fitted with a bulge intended to preclude a torpedo from penetrating to the interior of the ship. The latter protection is the invention of Sir E. H. W. Tennyson-D'Eyncourt, her designer. The cost of the *Hood* was £6,025,000.

The battle-cruiser was conceived as a big-gun ship with the speed of a fast cruiser so as to be capable of arriving on the scene of action with the least possible delay. The pioneers of the *Invincible* class carried eight 12-inch guns which could be fired as a broadside on either beam. The *Tiger*, completed in October 1914, was provided with 13·5-inch guns firing a shell of 1,400 lb., and a secondary armament of twelve 6-inch guns instead of sixteen 4-inch, as in the *Queen Mary*.

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Great Britain's initial venture in submarines, built at Barrow-in-Furness in 1901, was of 120 tons displacement when submerged, with a speed of 5 knots below the surface. So long before as 1888 France had launched the *Gymnote*, the first modern underwater craft to be commissioned. Nordenfeldt, of gun fame, had previously achieved a certain amount of success with steam-driven submarines, but they had many disadvantages as compared with those of Mr John P. Holland, an American. Germany's pioneer U-boat was built in 1890.

The deadliness of the mine was conclusively proved during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, when the Japanese battleships *Hatsuse* and *Yashima* both succumbed to Russian mines in the Yellow Sea. Their loss was not at first recognized as due to these deadly canisters of floating death, but the cause of their sinking was afterward ascertained, and the Admiralties of the world duly noted it. The Russian flagship *Petropavlovsk* suffered a like fate off Port Arthur in the same campaign, during the course of which fourteen Russian and ten Japanese vessels were lost by mines.

What fire-ships were to the old *régime*, torpedoes and mines are to the new Navy.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Battle of Heligoland Bight

I have learnt not to be surprised at anything.

NELSON

NOTWITHSTANDING Fisher's reforms, Britain's 'sure shield' was in anything but a state of real preparedness when war broke out in August 1914, despite official assurance to the contrary and the encomiums of Mr Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty. Instead of overwhelming superiority, our margin was dangerously fine. To all intents and purposes the main base at Scapa Flow was defenceless. There was not a single land-battery, and the whole fleet in home waters had only seventy-six destroyers—twenty fewer than the Germans—and of these thirty-six were based on Harwich.

There were no mines worthy the name and very few mine-sweepers, no director-firing gear for the guns of the secondary armament of the battleships, no naval base on the east coast equipped with protection against attack by submarine; the range-finders and searchlights were inferior to those of the enemy; instead of bursting inside a ship the British shells burst outside, and many of the battle-cruisers were under-armoured. When the Grand Fleet was denuded of the *Invincible* and the *Inflexible* for service elsewhere, Sir John Jellicoe was placed in what he calls

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“a very questionable position” as regards battle-cruisers. After the *Audacious* had been mined the effective margin of difference between the number of battleships and battle-cruisers at the disposal of the commander-in-chief and of the principal enemy was exceedingly narrow.

At the outbreak of war the ships based on home waters were divided into three main fleets, each distinct but co-operating in the general scheme. The First Fleet, in addition to Jellicoe's flagship the *Iron Duke*, was made up of four battle squadrons, totalling nineteen Dreadnoughts and super-Dreadnoughts, eight pre-Dreadnoughts, four battle-cruisers, four armoured cruisers, four cruisers of the *Devonshire* class and four others, a light-cruiser squadron of four ships, half a dozen gunboats converted into mine-sweepers, two flotilla cruisers, and destroyers. The Second Fleet consisted of two battle squadrons, numbering sixteen pre-Dreadnoughts, the Fifth and Sixth Cruiser Squadrons of seven ships, seven mine-layers, two patrol flotillas of two flotilla-cruisers and thirty-five destroyers. The oldest battleships constituted the two battle squadrons of the Third Fleet, and in addition there were five cruiser squadrons of obsolescent vessels. To these must be added numerous submarines and two repair-ships. Two destroyer-leaders, building for Chile, were purchased, three monitors were bought from the Brazilian Government, and two Dreadnoughts for Turkey were taken over. Many private yachts and ships of the merchant-service were commandeered for patrol and transport work.

The effective German High Sea Fleet consisted of thirteen Dreadnoughts in commission and three building, three battle-cruisers, sixteen older battle-

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ships, two armoured cruisers, fifteen light cruisers, and destroyers, torpedo-boats, and submarines. In the Far East were two armoured cruisers, three light cruisers, three old cruisers, four small vessels, and two destroyers. Three obsolete cruisers were in the vicinity of Australia, a light cruiser and three old cruisers in African waters, and a fast cruiser, the *Karlsruhe*, somewhere near the West Indies.

In addition to safeguarding her dominions and convoying troops from her colonies, Great Britain undertook to guard the North Sea and the English Channel. She shared with France the control of the Mediterranean, where Austria and Germany had three Dreadnought battleships, while France had eight. Of battle-cruisers there the enemy had one and Britain three, and France had eleven pre-Dreadnought battleships against six of the Central Powers. The latter had also three armoured cruisers, Great Britain four, and France six. There were also light cruisers, submarines, and destroyers.

While the Grand Fleet held the North Sea, with its area of 200,000 square miles, the High Sea Fleet had the advantage of being able to operate in either the North Sea or the Baltic by means of the Kiel Canal, both exits being protected by powerful fortifications. The Russian fleet in the Baltic comprised four Dreadnoughts, ten armoured and protected cruisers, two light cruisers, some eighty destroyers, mostly of antiquated types, and twenty-four small submarines.

The war on the waters did not start with a battle of the giants, as many people anticipated. The enemy played a waiting game, hoping to wear down the British Navy by the promiscuous sowing of mines and the development of the submarine. On August 5th,

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after a chase of about thirty miles by the light cruiser *Amphion* and destroyers, the *Königin Luise*, a passenger steamer hastily converted into a mine-layer, was sunk in the North Sea. A few hours later the *Amphion* struck one of the explosive canisters flung overboard by her victim and joined her in the realm of the underseas. Appropriately enough, Captain C. H. Fox, the commander of the flotilla, avenged the loss of his ship on the 17th of the following October, when he sank four German destroyers in a brilliant action which only cost five casualties. As a result of the murderous menace of the mine in the trade-routes, the North Sea was proclaimed a military area on November 3rd.

The crossing of the Expeditionary Force was begun on August 15th and completed on the 17th. On "the 16th—the day on which the largest amount of transport was passing—the Heligoland Bight was completely blockaded," we are told by Sir Julian Corbett, the writer of the official history. "To the north was disposed the Grand Fleet in full force, with Admiral de Chair and his four cruisers watching between it and the Skagerrak, while its extreme right was connected up with Terschelling by the Southern Force, consisting of the four *Bacchantes*, three light cruisers, and thirty-six destroyers, with four submarines in pairs, watching the mouth of the Jade and Ems. During these three days the transports made 137 passages—the tonnage passing being well over half a million—but still there was not a sign of the enemy moving—and on August 17th both forces returned to their normal stations, Loch Ewe being used by the Dreadnought squadron for the first time."

The first engagement of consequence took place



Ellis Silas



on August 28th, when a reconnaissance in force resulted in the battle of Heligoland Bight. The ships commanded by Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty consisted of a submarine flotilla, two flotillas of destroyers, a light-cruiser squadron, the First Battle-Cruiser Squadron, and the Seventh Cruiser Squadron, a goodly number of vessels. Beatty was at the time Britain's youngest admiral, being but forty-three years of age. During the Sudan campaign he had served under Kitchener and won the D.S.O. He led what was practically a forlorn hope when the Naval Brigade was attempting the relief of the legations at Peking, an affair in which Jellicoe also had played a gallant part.

In order to entice the enemy into the open, submarines were used as decoys to entice the Germans into the open. So far as two of them were concerned, this was by no means their first visit. Three hours after the outbreak of war E6 and E8 had proceeded without their parent ships, the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake*, to carry out a preliminary survey in the dangerous waters which wash Heligoland. After the Expeditionary Force had landed, the craft had "been incessantly employed," wrote their commander, Commodore Roger Keyes, "on the enemy's coast in the Heligoland Bight and elsewhere, and had obtained much valuable information regarding the composition and movement of his patrols. They have occupied his waters and reconnoitred his anchorages, and, while so engaged, have been subjected to skilful and well-executed anti-submarine tactics; hunted for hours at a time by torpedo craft and attacked by gunfire and torpedoes."

The submarines and their parent ships began their work in preparation for the battle at midnight on

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August 26th. Until the light faded on the following day, the *Lurcher*, with Keyes on board, and the *Firedrake* scouted for their companions, the latter then taking up their prearranged stations so as to co-operate with the destroyer flotillas when they appeared. No sooner had the first streaks of dawn stolen across the sky on the 28th than the two destroyers began the preliminary and extremely important business of searching for submarines in the course that would be taken by the battle-cruisers, performing a similar task to that of a pilot engine in advance of a royal train. This having been done, the submarines came to the surface, and with the parent ships boldly approached "the island key to Germany." The object of this bait was to induce the enemy "to chase them to the westward."

Commodore Tyrwhitt, on the bridge of the light cruiser *Arethusa*, and the First and Third Destroyer Flotillas were now approaching from the north-west at top speed, ready for instant action. They were followed by the First Light-Cruiser Squadron under Commodore Goodenough. Behind them were Beatty's giants. To the south, in such a position as would enable it to stop any attempt on the part of the enemy to escape westward, was the Seventh Cruiser Squadron, commanded by Rear-Admiral Christian, who already had a fine record of active service in West and East Africa to his credit.

The three submarines gently plying on the surface of the placid waters, their conning-towers exposed so as to make effective targets for the enemy, with the sleek destroyers following in their wake, were duly observed by the Germans, possibly by two of them in a seaplane. Here was food for cannon! How well

“Five British Men-of-War Sunk” would look as a headline for the newspapers of the Fatherland! What a sale they would have in Unter den Linden! These thoughts doubtless occurred to the commanders of the German destroyers and the two cruisers which presently came from their lair to catch such easy prey. Apparently taken off their guard, the five patrol-ships fled westward, followed by the units of the imperial fleet.

Suddenly out of the mist there emerged the British light cruisers *Arethusa* and *Fearless*, attended by the greyhounds of the First and Third Destroyer Flotillas. The *Arethusa* was the latest of a long line of ships bearing an honoured name, the original having been a French frigate of 32 guns captured in Audierne Bay in 1759. She was a light armoured cruiser of a class designed to be ‘destroyers of destroyers.’ The armament consists of a couple of 6-inch and half a dozen 4-inch quick-firing guns, with two twin torpedo-tubes. The displacement is 3,750 tons, oil fuel is used, and the turbines develop a speed of 29 to 30 knots. The *Fearless* also is a light cruiser, carrying ten 4-inch and four 3-pdr. guns, and was completed in 1913.

It wanted a few minutes to seven o’clock when the first enemy vessel was sighted and chased by them. Shortly afterward other German torpedo-boats were discovered making for Heligoland, and the course of the British ships was altered to cut them off from this haven of refuge. For over an hour and a quarter the *Arethusa* received a heavy fire from two large cruisers and several destroyers. One of the latter then turned her attention to the *Fearless*, but within ten minutes the *Arethusa*’s antagonist was making off as best she could with a wrecked fore-bridge. The

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British ship was also considerably damaged, and only one gun remained in action. She was temporarily *hors de combat*.

Meanwhile the British destroyers had also been in the thick of the fight and had sunk the leading destroyer of the enemy flotilla and injured several others. Our boats had the advantage of more powerful guns than the German torpedo-craft, which were armed with two 21-pdr. quick-firers, four Maxims, and three or four torpedo-tubes, but they also came under the fire of the forts and of the cruisers.

The *Liberty* went through a terrible ordeal. Part of the bridge was torn away by a shell which killed Lt.-Commander Nigel K. W. Barttelot and his signalman, shattered the foremast, and smashed the searchlight. Lieutenant Henry E. Horan thereupon took the officer's place, and "brought his ship out of action in an extremely able and gallant manner under most trying conditions," Chief Petty Officer J. S. Beadle remaining at his post for over an hour after he had been seriously wounded. Down below, the engineering staff went about their difficult business of stopping leaks, which were of such an alarming nature that most of the work was accomplished when the water had risen above the men's waists.

Three shells struck the *Laertes*, rendering a dynamo useless, wrecking the officers' cabin, and making a hole through the midship funnel. For a time she was hemmed in by two German vessels, and was finally towed out of action by the *Fearless*. A shell exploded in one of the boilers. On the *Laurel* eleven casualties were caused by a single shell, her two funnels were pierced, and some of her deck gear was smashed. Further damage to the funnels caused the smoke to

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beat down, and enveloped one of the gun-crews at a critical moment. Fortunately support from another craft came in the nick of time. The commander, wounded in both legs, refused to delegate his duty to another until six o'clock in the evening. An explosion occurred close to the centre gun, near which several lyddite shells were lying, but the promptness of a stoker petty officer prevented the fire from spreading, and he eventually put it out. The explosion also shattered the after funnel and played havoc in one of the boiler-rooms, yet the men below stuck to their posts and did their best to repair the damage when the ship was brought out of action. The crews of the destroyers proved themselves worthy of the finest traditions of the service.

An engineer of the *Laurel* tells us what the engagement was like from the point of view of the heroic 'black squad' in the engine-room. "We heard the shells crashing against the sides of the ship or shrieking overhead as they passed harmlessly into the water, and we knew that at any moment one might strike us in a vital part and send us below for good. It is ten times harder on the men whose duty is in the engine-room than for those on deck taking part in the fighting, for they, at least, have the excitement of the fight, and if the ship is struck they have more than a sporting chance of escape. We have none."

One splendid performance stands out conspicuously. The *Defender*, after having put the finishing touch to V187, lowered a whaler in the hope of being able to pick up survivors from the German commodore's ship. It had succeeded in hauling a number of them from the water when one of the enemy's cruisers chased the destroyer. She was no match for the ship

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at close range, and was therefore reluctantly compelled to abandon the boat. Although shells were bursting quite close, no damage was sustained, probably because the thick black smoke of the destroyers hung about the whaler on account of the stillness of the atmosphere and acted as a screen. The sea was exceptionally calm, but while this was cause for congratulation, there seemed not the faintest ray of hope for the poor fellows, who were entirely at the mercy of the enemy.

"Imagine their feelings," suggests a lieutenant who took part in the battle, "alone in an open boat without food, twenty-five miles from the nearest land, and that land the enemy's fortress, with nothing but fog and foes around them. Suddenly a whirl alongside, and up, if you please, pops his Britannic Majesty's submarine E4, opens his conning-tower, takes them all on board, shuts up again, dives, and brings them home 250 miles! Is that not magnificent? No novel would dare to face the critics with an episode like that in it, except perhaps Jules Verne; and all true!" As there was no room to accommodate the twenty-eight Germans, three only were taken prisoners, the others being allowed to make good their escape in the boat under the charge of an ober-lieutenant. They were provided with a compass, water, and biscuit.

The commander of E4, Lt.-Commander E. W. Lier, calmly standing at the periscope, had witnessed the sinking of V187 and the dastardly attempt of the German cruiser on the rescue party. He attempted to attack the ship, but was foiled by a change of course before he came within range. After covering the retirement of the British destroyers he returned and performed the feat mentioned above.

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By 10 a.m. the temporary disablement of the *Arethusa* had been remedied to some extent by almost superhuman exertions on the part of her officers and crew, although her speed was considerably reduced by reason of a water-tank having been hit. The repairs were effected none too soon, for almost immediately Tyrwhitt received a wireless message from Keyes stating that the *Lurcher* and the *Firedrake* were being chased by the *Mainz*, the *Köln*, and another cruiser. The *Arethusa*, the *Fearless*, and the First Flotilla went to his assistance with right goodwill. One of the cruisers, on being attacked by gunfire and torpedoes, disappeared in the mist, only to come round on another quarter about ten minutes later. The *Arethusa* and the *Fearless* again brought their armament to bear on her, and a torpedo attack was also made, but failed.

"We received a very severe and almost accurate fire from this cruiser," runs the official dispatch; "salvo after salvo was falling between ten and thirty yards short, but not a single shell struck; two torpedoes were also fired at us, being well directed, but short. The cruiser was badly damaged by *Arethusa's* 6-inch guns and a splendidly directed fire from *Fearless*, and she afterward turned away in the direction of Heligoland."

A few minutes later the cruiser *Mainz* came into view. The *Arethusa*, the *Fearless*, and many destroyers seized on her with the avidity of hungry wolves. For nearly half an hour she endured their concentrated fire. According to an A.B. on the *Lydiard*, that ship succeeded in sending a torpedo into the enemy which tore an ugly, gaping wound in her side. The *Lydiard*, which was in the thick of

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the fight, escaped severe handling, although a shell burst just before the bridge.

Tyrwhitt had sent a wireless to Beatty summing up the position of affairs, and just as the German cruiser was seen to be in flames and sinking by the bows the Light-Cruiser Squadron appeared. The *Falmouth* and the *Nottingham* speedily decided the destiny of the *Mainz*. Every effort was now made to rescue the crew of the doomed cruiser.

"The fire amidships," relates an eyewitness, "had made two of the funnels red-hot, and flames and smoke poured out of it. Her port side was like a sieve. Every gun was smashed and bent, some looking round corners, some on their sides—in fact, her whole upper deck was chaos. The fore-bridge was a tangled mass of ironwork, while the wire stays from the foremast were swaying in the air. What she was like inside, heaven alone knows. We passed within a couple of hundred yards of her, and the only living beings on the upper deck were one man on the quarterdeck and what looked like a couple of officers standing under what had been the fore-bridge. Many of them had jumped overboard, and, of course, were rescued, but these only totalled seven officers and seventy-nine men out of a crew of 400 or 500." When volunteers were asked to man the rescue boats from the *Falmouth* a stoker limped along the deck with a burnt leg. "That man cannot go," shouted an officer. "You don't pull an oar with your foot, sir," was the reply.

The *Arethusa* and the Third Flotilla next proceeded to deal with the *Köln*. The First Battle-Cruiser Squadron, consisting of the *Lion*, *Princess Royal*, *Queen Mary*, and *New Zealand*, which had been

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joined at sea by the *Invincible* and four destroyers, now came on the scene. Every movement of the British squadrons seemed to be regulated with the precision of a well-rehearsed play, yet the final part of the programme had not been carried out without running considerable risks. The enemy submarines had attempted to torpedo some of the ships, and would probably have succeeded had their designs not been frustrated by rapid manœuvring that denoted superb seamanship. The decision to use the great cruisers was made by the Vice-Admiral after he had carefully weighed up the likelihood of possible disaster from the operations of undersea craft, mines, and of a sortie in force by the German Main Fleet. "Our high speed, however," he says, "made submarine attack difficult, and the smoothness of the sea made their detection comparatively easy. I considered that we were powerful enough to deal with any sortie except a Battle Squadron, which was unlikely to come out in time, provided our stroke was sufficiently rapid."

When Sir David caught the first glimpse of what was happening as he paced the bridge of the *Lion*, he noticed that the *Fearless* and the First Flotilla were retiring westward, the Light-Cruiser Squadron was engaging the *Mainz*, and the *Arethusa* and the Third Flotilla were still busy with the *Köln*. Steering in a direction that would enable him to cut off the *Köln* from her base, the *Lion* gave chase, and set her on fire. The *Ariadne* now put in an appearance. Two salvos were sufficient to render the new-comer unseaworthy, but as floating mines had been reported on the course she was steering, the Admiral wisely forbore from following his beaten quarry. He again turned his

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attention to the *Köln*, giving her a couple of salvos from two turrets which sent her to Davy Jones's locker stern first. Not a soul was saved, although our destroyers raced to the spot in the hope of picking up possible survivors.

The battle of Heligoland Bight was over, and the first naval engagement of the Great War had conclusively proved the superiority of the British at sea. On their return northward the *Queen Mary* and the *Lowestoft* were unsuccessfully attacked by submarines, possibly those which had awaited their coming. The splendid fight of the *Arethusa*, and the heavy fire that she had endured, had crippled her steaming capacity to such an extent that she could only crawl at about 6 knots an hour. At 9.30 p.m. the *Hogue* took her in tow, Captain W. S. Nicholson performing the task "in a most seamanlike manner," said Tyrwhitt, "and observing that the night was pitch dark and the only lights showing were two small hand-lanterns, I consider his action was one which deserves special notice from their Lordships." On arriving at the Nore the steel hawsers were cast off and the plucky and still saucy *Arethusa* proceeded to Chatham under her own steam. There she was received with rousing cheers that must have heartened the battle-stained sea-dogs as they stood by their disabled guns.

The complements of the five enemy vessels sunk totalled some 1,200 officers and men. With the exception of the twenty-five men who were set at liberty and about 300 prisoners, including the son of Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, who were brought to land, the remainder perished. The total British casualties numbered sixty-nine killed and wounded.

CHAPTER XXV

The Forlorn Hope of Coronel

Am going to attack the enemy now.

CRADOCK

THE date was Sunday, November 1, 1914, the time two o'clock in the afternoon, and the place somewhere off the coast of Chile. Rear-Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock had just been informed that one of the wireless operators had picked up a message in a strange code.

Cradock was no mere 'manœuvres man.' He had entered the Navy at the age of thirteen, and but fifteen years after our first ironclad had taken the water. He had seen active service in the Sudan in 1891, was present at the battle of Tokar and at the occupation of Affafit, and had been mentioned in dispatches. In the following year he was serving as first lieutenant of H.M.S. *Dolphin*, and helped to rescue the crew of the ill-fated Brazilian warship *Barroxa* when she foundered in a gale. Eight years later Cradock was commander of H.M.S. *Alacrity* and in charge of the British Naval Brigade which did such splendid work at the storming and capture of the Taku Forts, and he subsequently led the allied forces which captured the Peiyang arsenal and relieved Tientsin and Sir Edward Seymour's column at Siku.

At mess some of the men of the *Good Hope* would spin yarns of the Rear-Admiral's other brave deeds ;

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of how he had won the Royal Humane Society's testimonial for rescuing a drowning midshipman who had fallen overboard in the darkness in Palmas Bay, Sardinia, and of how he had helped to save life when the P. & O. liner *Delhi* had been wrecked off Cape Spartel in 1911. On this latter occasion he had been made a K.C.V.O. by the King, presented with the Silver Medal of the Board of Trade, and received the cordial appreciation of the Admiralty.

When war was declared the *Good Hope* was patrolling the Irish coast. She was at no great distance from the Southern Hebrides when a message was received from the Admiralty ordering her to sweep the trade-routes of the broad Atlantic for German cruisers that were known to be abroad. She found none, and proceeded to Halifax to coal. Shortly afterward Sir Christopher Cradock transferred his flag from H.M.S. *Suffolk*, which had been carrying out similar duties, to the *Good Hope*. Thus she became the senior ship of a squadron which consisted, in addition to herself, of the *Monmouth*, the *Glasgow*, the *Canopus*, and the *Otranto*. Both the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* were ships of the third line and manned by reservists who, previous to the outbreak of war, had followed civil occupations since leaving the service, and were of necessity less inured to the sea than was the crew of the *Glasgow*, which had been in South American waters for some time.

It is necessary for us to glance at a few rather dull but necessary particulars of the qualities of these fighting machines, otherwise the battle in which four of them played so gallant a part cannot be appreciated at its real worth.

The *Good Hope*, officially known as an armoured

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cruiser, had been a contribution to the Navy by the colony whose name she bore. She was of 14,100 tons displacement, with a speed of 23 knots and an armament of two 9·2-inch, sixteen 6-inch, twelve 12-pdrs., three 3-pdrs., and two machine-guns, and two submerged torpedo-tubes. So far as the British public was concerned the *Good Hope* was chiefly famous as the vessel which had taken Mr Joseph Chamberlain to South Africa on the conclusion of the Boer War of 1899-1902. That eminent statesman was then Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the choice of the ship was particularly appropriate. The *Good Hope* had ploughed the seas for twelve years, and was therefore by no means a modern vessel in the sense of a term which is constantly undergoing revision as a period of time, particularly in regard to naval matters.

The *Monmouth* was an armoured cruiser of the 'County' class, a Glasgow ship which left the yards completed in 1903. Her displacement was 9,800 tons, her speed 23 knots, her armament fourteen 6-inch, eight 12-pdrs., three 3-pdrs., eight machine-guns, and two light guns, and she had also two submerged torpedo-tubes. The *Glasgow* is a light cruiser of the type used for scouting purposes, and was built by the same firm that had constructed the *Good Hope*, whom she post-dated by seven years. Her displacement is 4,800 tons, her speed over 26 knots, her armament two 6-inch, ten 4-inch, one 12-pdr., and four 3-pdr. guns, with two submerged torpedo-tubes.

The *Otranto* was an auxiliary cruiser—that is to say, a liner commissioned for war service and lightly armed. Her displacement was 12,124 tons. She was well known to tourists to the Norwegian fiords, and

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was probably the largest British ship to pay visits to the Land of the Midnight Sun during the summer months previous to the Great War. The *Otranto* belonged to the Orient line, and was built at Belfast in 1909. For the purpose of making prizes of German merchantmen she was doubtless useful, but in the action that was about to take place she proved rather worse than useless. For these reasons: the speed of a squadron is necessarily that of its slowest unit, and although the *Otranto* was driven by turbines, her utmost capacity was 18 knots only; she presented a conspicuous target to the enemy, and the range and calibre of her guns were useless in a long-distance action.

The *Canopus* was a venerable battleship seventeen years old mounting four 12-inch guns in two turrets, twelve 6-inch guns in armoured casemates, and six 3-pdrs. Her speed was 16 knots, and her displacement 13,500 tons.

From Halifax Cradock's ships had proceeded to Bermuda and the West Indies, and along the coasts of Venezuela and Brazil. Several times the stormy Horn, the scene of many an old-time exploit, was rounded, and the Falkland Islands were visited. At the latter the Admiral left the *Canopus* to guard his colliers, and asked for the *Defence* to be placed at his disposal. The *Defence*, which had been completed in 1909, of 14,600 tons and armed with four 9·2-inch, ten 7·5-inch, and sixteen 12-pdrs., was accordingly ordered to join the squadron. Unfortunately neither she nor the order that he was not expected to act without the *Canopus* reached Cradock. "But he had been previously told," writes the official historian, "to 'be prepared to have to meet' the enemy and to

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‘search’—expressions which, taken together, a British officer in his position could only interpret as an order to ‘seek out the enemy and destroy him.’ As this could not be done if he had to drag the old battleship along with him, he appears to have felt that, by the unwritten law of the service, an order to seek out must override all others.” The Earl of Balfour (then Mr A. J. Balfour), First Lord of the Admiralty, stated that the Admiral “had shown a wise judgment in the interests of his country.”

The squadron made “swoops upon wild and unsurveyed bays and places whither we had heard the enemy had gone to coal, etc., but failed to find them there, although we heard their secret and friendly wireless stations talking in code.” Thus wrote an officer in the *Glasgow*. The men experienced the extremes of heat and cold, sweating like fat bulls of Bashan in some latitudes and shivering at Tierra del Fuego and in the infamous Magellan Straits. Some of the officers were perfectly well aware that the five German cruisers of Admiral von Spee’s Pacific Squadron, the *Scharnhorst*, the *Gneisenau*, the *Leipzig*, the *Dresden*, and the *Nürnberg* were “somewhere about” and outclassed them in guns, but no British sailor has been known to admit that he could be outclassed in seamanship. On the lower deck there was a belief that the contestants would prove to be three light cruisers only. Perhaps the *Nürnberg* and the *Dresden*, which had been in the Atlantic, had come together and joined the *Leipzig*, last heard of in the North Pacific. Thus they argued. It seemed scarcely probable that all five had concentrated and were bearing down on the British squadron. These and other more or less plausible suggestions were ventured as the

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men discussed the possibility of 'something happening.' As to the progress of the war in the other hemisphere, the brave Jack Tars knew practically nothing. It is pathetic to read in the letters some of them sent home of the dreary monotony, the lack of news, and of the ice and snow and blazing heat that discomfited them. Not a few of the writers thought that the Admiralty could have sent a more imposing force, but none conveys the slightest notion of 'funk.' "We will fight cheerfully whatever odds we may have to face," are the words of the Admiral's secretary. "Five German cruisers against us," writes Surgeon Searle, of the *Good Hope*. "What's the betting on the field? Pray to your Penates we may prevent them concentrating." "We have travelled 10,000 miles hunting for the *Dresden*," asserts a stoker on the *Monmouth*. "We will 'bust' her or sink. If we meet with bad luck, you will know all on the *Monmouth* died game, and that your son has done his duty to his country, pleased with the honour."

In the fulfilment of the hope expressed by Surgeon Searle lay the main chance of the squadron. Should one or two of these German vessels be missing all might be well. Together the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* had sixteen 8·2-inch guns, each firing 275-lb. shells, twelve of which could be brought to bear on the broadside, twelve 6-inch guns, and thirty 4-inch guns, whereas the British had in all only two 9·2-inch guns, firing 380-lb. shells, thirty-two 6-inch guns, and ten 4-inch guns. So far as long range and weight of metal were concerned the chances against Cradock's ships were consequently more than four to one. The *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* were sister ships, the newest of their class, and were superior

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in armoured protection as well as in ordnance. Both were launched in 1906 and had a displacement of 11,600 tons. The three light cruisers, all launched between 1905 and 1907, varied from 3,250 to 3,600 tons displacement, and each had ten 4.1-inch and two 1-pdr. guns, with two torpedo-tubes.

On this same Sunday, but earlier in the day, the light cruiser *Glasgow* had left Coronel, Chile, from which place the battle which was to ensue takes its name. At 2 p.m., while on her way to rejoin the other ships at the appointed rendezvous, she received a signal from the *Good Hope* "that apparently from wireless calls there was an enemy ship to northward," to quote the captain's report. This was the secret of the message in a strange code already referred to. At 4.20 p.m. those on the look-out sighted smoke on the horizon. After drawing close enough to ascertain the nationality of the ship from whence the smoke emanated, the *Glasgow* put on full steam and made in the direction of the British squadron. Captain John Luce at once informed the Admiral of the approach of two armoured cruisers and one small cruiser—in reality there were three—at the same time warning all vessels in sight. Apparently Cradock received a coherent message, although the Germans endeavoured to break in with their own installations and so cause confusion. In due course the *Monmouth* and the *Otranto* were discovered, and at five o'clock the *Good Hope* was sighted.

Two alternatives, and two only, presented themselves to Sir Christopher Cradock. It may be that in speaking thus we are doing an injustice to the memory of a very gallant gentleman, because it is possible, and indeed probable, that to his mind there

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was no alternative other than conflict. The alternatives, fancied or real, were these: he could fight the enemy and suffer defeat, or he could await the coming of the *Canopus* and then endeavour to bring him to battle. To the first there was the hope that he might inflict loss or severe damage on some of the light cruisers, if not on the heavier men-of-war; to the second there was the likelihood of the Germans escaping him altogether and carrying on a one-sided war against British commerce.

Forming into line ahead, his own vessel first, the *Monmouth*, the *Glasgow*, and the *Otranto* following in the order mentioned, Cradock led his ships into battle. This was a few minutes after a quarter to six o'clock, when the Germans, having turned south, were in single line-ahead, the two big cruisers leading. The contestants were then twelve miles apart, the distance being gradually reduced as the ships worked up to 17 knots. Half an hour later, when von Spee's squadron was 15,000 yards away, the Admiral wired to the *Canopus*: "I am going to attack enemy now." Had the range not been too great, this was Cradock's opportunity to open fire, for the sun was slowly setting behind the British squadron, showing up the enemy ships with great distinctness and therefore trying to the eyes of the German gunners. Cradock endeavoured to shorten the distance between his squadron and that of the enemy, but von Spee effectively precluded this manœuvre. Not a shot was fired until 7.3 p.m., when the sun had disappeared and the British ships were silhouetted against the golden afterglow. Fortune thus favoured von Spee, and he fired salvos and speedily got the correct range.

Not a single condition was helpful to Cradock. It

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was blowing almost a gale, with a lumpy sea, and firing was made difficult for the main-deck guns—the only ones that really mattered—of the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* because of the heavy spray that was flung over the bows. Almost the first order of the Admiral after the action had begun was to signal the captain of the *Otranto* to get out of the firing-line, and she made off in the direction of the south-west. According to one report, she was steaming badly and hampered the movements of her consorts. It is also said, perhaps incorrectly, that Cradock issued similar instructions to the *Glasgow*, which her captain disregarded.

It is impossible to describe the battle off Coronel with complete accuracy, because the logs of the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* were not written up that day, and unfortunately never will be. A description of what happened must therefore be based on the dispatch of Captain Luce, which is by no means a lengthy one, as issued by the Admiralty, the communications of those who served on the surviving ships, and the report of Admiral Maximilian Count von Spee as it appeared in the German newspapers. They differ in detail and sometimes in essentials. For instance, Captain Luce states that the enemy opened fire at 12,000 yards, whereas von Spee says about 15,000 yards, and a participant on board the *Glasgow* makes it 12,300 yards. Again, a wireless operator on the *Otranto* asserts that firing did not begin until 7.15. Bearing in mind the difficulties of the situation, let us endeavour to arrive at the main facts.

We can readily believe with a member of the crew of the *Otranto* that “if there is a hell of fire it must be a naval battle.” Almost immediately after the

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first flash from the enemy's guns the *Good Hope*, the *Monmouth*, and the *Glasgow* responded, each ship engaging the one opposite to it. According to von Spee, the British ships suffered more from the heavy seas than those under his command, the vessels on both sides rolling and pitching heavily, particularly the light cruisers. "Observation and range-finding work," he asserts, "was most difficult, the seas sweeping over the forecastles and conning-towers and preventing the use of some guns on the middle decks, the crews of which were never able to see the sterns of their opponents, and only occasionally their bows." It is obvious that similar conditions obtained in the British squadron. The Admiral makes special mention of the gunnery of the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*, the two large armoured cruisers, which "were well served." He adds that the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* "were practically covered by our fire," a statement corroborated by British eyewitnesses, and that "so far as can be ascertained at present"—there has been no subsequent report—his flagship was only hit twice and the *Gneisenau* four times. Each of the big German cruisers concentrated six of their 8·2-inch guns on the *Good Hope*, the smaller ships being outranged at the beginning of the fight.

The third salvo from the enemy set fire to the fore-part of both the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth*, and very soon the fore-turret of the former was well ablaze. The flames were apparently got under after what must have been almost incredible exertion on the part of the crews, for shells were screeching all around them. Both ships again caught fire, and remained blazing away until 7.45. The pale light of the moon made but a sorry show compared with the

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fierce light of the burning cruisers. According to von Spee, the fore-turret of the *Good Hope* was carried away, and the *Scharnhorst* reckoned that she had scored no fewer than thirty-five hits on Cradock's flagship. The only guns on the British flagship capable of making effective reply had been her two 9·2-inch guns, her 6-inch guns being rendered almost useless by the height of the waves and the low line at which her secondary ordnance was placed. It is said that when the vessel rolled they were almost awash, and that when Cradock realized that he could do no further damage to the enemy he deliberately attempted to get closer to his antagonists, so as to draw their fire and thus afford some measure of protection to his other ships. At ten minutes to eight an explosion lit up the darkness and the sullen sea, and flames two hundred feet high shot up amidships of the *Good Hope*. Thus ended her first and last fight, and what remained of her disappeared with her whole gallant company.

Meanwhile what had happened to the *Monmouth*? After the outbreak of fire she sheered off the line, but managed to get back to it, notwithstanding the avalanche of shells that was gradually reducing her floating capacity to that of a sieve. Her 6-inch guns fired from time to time, her only mark the flashes that came from the enemy. She was already sinking and down by the bow, and the captain therefore endeavoured to get her stern to sea, so as to reduce the intake of water. Very soon it was apparent that she was completely out of control, and as the *Glasgow* passed her the crew could be seen assembled at the stern. The brave fellows, knowing that there was no possibility of escape, and that within a short time

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a watery grave would embrace them, gave three hearty British cheers.

By the rising moon the enemy ships could be seen drawing on the remaining vessel of the squadron. In order to avoid certain destruction and to warn the *Canopus*, the *Glasgow* proceeded at full speed in a west-north-westerly direction, steering for the Magellan Straits. To have remained would have been certain suicide, and no officer is called upon to sacrifice his ship and his men for the mere sake of fighting or from any false sense of patriotism. As it was, the light cruiser had had several narrow escapes. A shell just missed the sick-bay and came hurtling through the captain's cabin, rendering it almost unrecognizable, a hole was torn in one of the funnels, and a great gash made in the lower coal-bunker necessitated the use of the pumps to keep the water under. An officer calculated that about 600 shells were aimed at the *Glasgow*.

Although the searchlights of the pursuing vessels swept the sea, the engineers and stokers managed to get 27·8 knots out of her, notwithstanding her condition and the rough sea, and she gradually drew off. "The three days' flight in which the *Glasgow* was getting away from them," writes one who was on her, "will never be forgotten by any one on board, and if anybody deserves promotion in the *Glasgow* it is the officers and men of the engineering and carpenter branches. Nobody would believe the speed we maintained for forty-eight hours." The stokers, working considerably harder than the proverbial nigger, sang "It's a long, long way to Tipperary" and "We'll all go the same way home" during the action. At ten minutes to nine the Germans were

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lost in the darkness, but half an hour later flashes of fire showed that they were still concentrating on the helpless *Monmouth*. It has been stated by one who observed the battle that, despite her crippled and sinking condition, the old cruiser "went back to fight—to cover our escape," that she "stood the rub while we were getting away." This tallies with von Spee's statement that "the *Nürnberg* came across the *Monmouth*," which, badly damaged, crossed her bows and then tried to come alongside. "At 8.58," the Admiral adds, "the *Nürnberg* sank her by a bombardment at point-blank range"—hence the flashes observed from the *Glasgow*. "The *Monmouth* did not reply, but she went down with her flag flying."

While we can readily believe with the German admiral that "there was no chance of saving anybody owing to the heavy sea," it is difficult to credit the statement that the *Nürnberg* "sighted smoke and believed that another enemy ship was approaching, which she prepared to attack." At the same time it is only just to cite the evidence of the captain of the French barque *Valentine* regarding the sinking of the *Good Hope*, which von Spee says his small cruisers were unable to find. The *Valentine* was sunk by one of von Spee's ships within half a mile of Juan Fernandez, the volcanic group of islands associated with Alexander Selkirk, on whose exploits Defoe is said to have based his story of Robinson Crusoe. She was consequently in Chilian territorial waters, and the Germans therefore violated the neutrality of the Republic. According to a United Press correspondent, the captain swore before a public notary that while he was a prisoner aboard one of the cruisers he heard Germans assert that numerous British sailors were

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seen swimming after the destruction of Cradock's flagship, that they could have been saved, but the enemy allowed them to drown. It should be remembered, however, that when a ship is in action the boats are not on davits and are usually filled with water, and that consequently they are not readily available. Certainly on this particular occasion it is doubtful whether rescue work could have been safely undertaken owing to the bad weather. Von Spee was a worthy enemy, as the following story will prove. It is related by the Hon. W. Allardyce, ex-Governor of the Falkland Islands, and later Governor of the Bahamas. He had been told that after the battle the German colony at Valparaiso gave a banquet to celebrate the victory. When the final toast of "Damnation to the British Navy!" was proposed the German admiral jumped up and said that neither he nor his officers would respond, and they at once withdrew. The steps near the doors were covered with flowers, and von Spee remarked as he saw them: "I think you had better keep these for my grave. They may be wanted."

In his report Captain John Luce, of the *Glasgow*, whose name will always be held in honour for the valiant part he played, says: "Nothing could have been more admirable than conduct of officers and men throughout. Though it was most trying to receive great volume of fire without chance of returning it adequately, all kept perfectly cool, there was no wild firing, and discipline was the same as at battle practice.

"When target ceased to be visible, gunlayers spontaneously ceased fire.

"The serious reverse sustained has entirely failed



THE "DREADNOUGHT" OFF THE TYNE



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to impair the spirit of officers and ship's company, and it is our unanimous wish to meet the enemy again as soon as possible."

Von Spee states that the fire of the *Glasgow* was "harmless," and gives the number of casualties on the *Gneisenau* as "two slightly wounded" and none on the small cruisers, while any losses on the *Scharnhorst* are ignored. The *Glasgow*, after eluding the enemy, put in at Rio de Janeiro, where she was repaired by permission of the Brazilian Government, who gave her a stated time for the purpose. How efficiently this task was carried out, and what excellent work she performed in the battle off the Falkland Islands on the following December 8th, when von Spee met with retribution, will be told in the next chapter.

We have seen that Sir Christopher Cradock's defeat was almost a foregone conclusion before so much as a shot was fired. One at least of the German papers, the Berlin *Allgemeine Zeitung*, paid a fitting compliment to the 1,654 men who met death so gallantly on that cheerless November evening. While making the most of the victory, the writer adds: "On the other hand we too must recognize, if the present reports are confirmed, that the British ships strove to the last moment to keep their colours flying, and that the cruiser *Monmouth* in her own extremity tried her best to take with her beneath the waves a German ship. The naval victory in Chilian waters is the more valuable because it was gained over a courageous enemy."

Of the crew of the *Good Hope* four alone were saved, and for no other reason than that they had the good fortune to be on an island doing look-out duties when

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the battle was fought. A Chilian transport and the Red Cross steamers *Valdivia* and *Chiloe* were dispatched to search for possible survivors, but they found neither sailors nor wreckage. A few weeks later British bluejackets on one of the British battle-cruisers that exacted retribution for the loss of the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* fired a volley over the spot where their comrades perished.

A fine and gallant story !

CHAPTER XXVI

Sturdee's Triumph at the Falklands

Silence ! Deeds, not words !

FISHER

THREE days before the names of Sir Christopher Cradock and his band of heroes were added to Britain's ever-lengthening Roll of Honour, a little man of grim visage hurried up the steps of the huge block of buildings known as the Admiralty. A few people who happened to be passing recognized the trim figure, the ashen-grey and purposeful face, and the slightly stooping shoulders as the outward and visible signs of the most dominating personality of modern naval history. The second administration of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher of Kilverstone as First Sea Lord had begun.

He struck his first blow on the 8th of the following December, not in the North Sea, as so many folk had anticipated, but in the South Atlantic, off the coast of Argentina, and far removed from the main theatre of war. When he received news of Cradock's disaster he went quietly to work to avenge the loss of the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth*, choosing for his purpose Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick Charles Doveton Sturdee, Chief of the War Staff at the Admiralty, and the ships *Invincible*, *Inflexible*, *Carnarvon*, *Cornwall*, *Kent*, *Bristol*, *Glasgow*, *Canopus*, and *Macedonia*, some of which were already near the scene of the

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intended operations. Nelson said, "Only numbers can annihilate," a maxim dear to the heart of Lord Fisher. Two battle-cruisers, one battleship, three armoured cruisers, two light cruisers, and an armed liner were provided for the purpose. Sturdee was given what poor Cradock had lacked—speed and heavy armament. To von Spee's broadside of six 8.2-inch guns on the *Scharnhorst*, hurling 1,650 lb. of metal, Sturdee could make reply with eight 12-inch guns firing 6,800 lb. In speed the British admiral's flagship, the *Invincible*, was $2\frac{1}{2}$ knots faster than the *Scharnhorst*.

"I very well remember," writes Rear-Admiral Sir Douglas Brownrigg, Bart., "the sending off of the cables which ordered the two battle-cruisers, *Invincible* and *Inflexible*—then with the Grand Fleet—to come south, and the further message which flatly declined to listen to any reasons for delay at Plymouth—where they were preparing for their long voyage to the south—stating bluntly that, whether this or that fitting was completed or not, the ships were positively to sail on the date and at the time ordered. The workmen, if necessary, were to be taken to sea in the ships to finish their work *en route* to the south. Under no considerations was the departure of the ships to be delayed. On that point Lord Fisher was inflexible. The ships left as arranged, and, fortunately for this country, the imperious and forceful old man had his way."

Since the battle off Coronel the inhabitants of the rugged Falkland Islands, which lie about 250 miles east of the mainland of South America, had not been at all easy in their minds by reason of their isolation and the menace of von Spee. At any moment the

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German ships might appear on the horizon, the wireless station would be destroyed as a matter of course, and for all they knew men, women, and children would be put to the sword.

To the intense relief of the islanders, the British squadron arrived on December 7th, and at once proceeded to take in coal. The task was finished not a moment too soon, for early on the morning of the following day the enemy ships were sighted from the top of a hill by a member of a local volunteer force, and the information signalled to Admiral Sturdee. It is said that when the flag-lieutenant, clad in pyjamas, informed the Admiral that the enemy was in sight, Sir Frederick Sturdee stopped his shaving and calmly remarked: "Well, you had better go and get dressed, and we'll see about it later." His first order was for the crews to have breakfast.

At the moment the *Macedonia*, to outward appearance a harmless liner, was at anchor at the mouth of the bay serving as a look-out ship, the *Kent* and the battle-cruisers the *Invincible* and the *Inflexible* were at Port William, and the remaining vessels at Port Stanley, or, as we may term them, the outer and the inner harbour respectively. It was of the utmost importance that von Spee should be kept in ignorance of the presence of the battle-cruisers until Sturdee was ready for his coup. Word was accordingly passed down to the engine-room that steam was to be raised with oil fuel, which emits the filthiest smoke imaginable. It soon came pouring out of the giant funnels in mammoth wreaths that filled the harbour and for a time effectually screened everything from view. Down below in each ship the stokers worked with a will to raise steam for full speed in the

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shortest possible time. Every tick of the engine-room clock seemed to increase the tension. The 'black gang' took on added dignity, for they alone could prevent the escape of the Germans. Then the *Kent* slowly left her moorings and stationed herself at the entrance to the bay.

When the leading enemy ships, the *Gneisenau* and the *Nürnberg*, were within range, the *Canopus* fired across the low neck of land. They turned away, shortly afterward altering their course so as to engage the *Kent*. While this was being done they apparently discerned the battle-cruisers, for the *Gneisenau* and the *Nürnberg* made off in the direction of their consorts to seek safety in flight. The *Glasgow* then emerged from her hiding-place and joined the *Kent* in order that von Spee's movements might be kept under further observation. Five minutes afterward the main squadron, with the exception of the *Bristol*, steamed out, the *Carnarvon* leading, followed by the *Inflexible*, the *Invincible* (flagship), and the *Cornwall*. The weather conditions were perfect—clear, calm, and sunshiny, with a light breeze. They were therefore in marked contrast to those which obtained when Cradock gave battle off Coronel.

When the *Invincible* poked her inquisitive nose out of harbour the rear ship of the enemy was seventeen miles away. Then began a chase lasting for over two hours. The battle-cruisers forged ahead and speedily overtook the *Kent*, but just before going into action they slowed down, so that all might take up their allotted stations. Mrs Roy Felton, watching the progress of the race from a hill, saw two enemy colliers coming from the direction of Cape Horn. She telephoned to the authorities, who sent the news

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by wireless to the British admiral. The *Bristol* and the armed auxiliary *Macedonia* were detailed to deal with them. They promptly removed the crews of the colliers and sank the ships. For her patriotic service the lady was presented with a piece of plate by the Admiralty.

At 12.47 p.m. Sir Frederick Sturdee ordered the *Invincible*, the *Inflexible*, and the *Glasgow* to "Open fire and engage the enemy." The *Inflexible* let fly from her fore-turret at the *Leipzig*, followed by the *Invincible*, which also made a target of the light cruiser. The latter soon began to drop astern. The firing was altogether too fast and furious for comfort. Together with the *Nürnberg* and *Dresden* she turned away to the south-west, hoping to escape. Immediately the *Kent*, the *Glasgow*, and the *Cornwall* steamed off in the same direction.

The battle-cruisers and the *Carnarvon* now transferred their attention to von Spee's flagship and the *Gneisenau*. When the range was ascertained, after another chase due to change of course, Admiral Sturdee signalled "God save the King," and the 'great grey wolves of the sea' opened fire at a distance of about seven miles, speedily setting the *Scharnhorst* ablaze forward, and causing the reply of her guns to slacken. The *Gneisenau* was also wounded. By 3.30 the third funnel of the *Scharnhorst* was shot away. The effect of the fire on this vessel, says Sir Frederick Sturdee, "became more and more apparent in consequence of smoke from fires, and also escaping steam; at times a shell would cause a large hole to appear in her side, through which could be seen a dull red glow of flame. At 4.4 p.m. the *Scharnhorst*, whose flag remained flying to the last, suddenly listed heavily

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to port, and within a minute it became clear that she was a doomed ship; for the list increased very rapidly until she lay on her beam-ends, and at 4.17 p.m. she disappeared." Admiral von Spee went down with his flagship, and his two sons also perished. The 22nd German Navy casualty list consisted of the names of 877 officers and men missing from the *Scharnhorst*.

The *Invincible* was hit by several shells, and a hole was made on the stokers' mess-deck, above the water-line. One shell dropped almost vertically, and exploded in the Admiral's store, where it did no vital damage. All her injuries were of a minor character and soon repaired. Her gunners had been firing on and off for about five hours.

The consort of the German flagship continued to put up a spirited defence, although she was now subjected to the full fury of the *Invincible*, the *Inflexible*, and the *Carnarvon*. The forward funnel was bowled over; the flashes from her armament became more fitful. By 5.30 her engines had stopped, steam was pouring from her escape pipes, fires were evident in a dozen different parts of the ship, smoke belched forth and hung like a canopy above the stricken vessel. Apparently a single gun only remained workable, and spluttered at intervals. The Germans were 'game' to the last. Ten minutes after Admiral Sturdee had given the order to cease fire the *Gneisenau* heeled over and lay for a minute on her beam-ends. Then she sank like a stone.

Everything possible was done to rescue the crew, some 600 of whom had been killed or wounded during this contest of giants. Scores were numbed by the icy water and disappeared, but as many as possible were lifted into boats sent by the British ships, while

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others were saved by lifebuoys and other articles that were flung overboard. On the battle-cruisers officers and men rubbed the survivors with towels to stimulate the circulation, gave them every comfort they could think of, put them in blankets, treated them as gallant gentlemen. "The men and officers we picked up were stiff as pieces of wood in the freezing water," notes one who was engaged in the work of rescue. Some died while they were being brought in, and were buried at sea with full naval honours. Thus does Britain honour the gallant dead, whether friend or enemy. After the first sharp sting of defeat had disappeared two of the German officers amused themselves by working out the details of the fight with matches to represent the various ships, and another congratulated the gunnery-officer of the *Inflexible* on his rapid rate of fire and the number of hits he made.

Much had happened in the encounter of the light cruisers. In the pursuit of the enemy vessels the gallant little *Glasgow*, as though eager to wipe out the stain of the action off Coronel, drew ahead of the *Cornwall* and the *Kent*. At 3 o'clock her 6-inch guns began to speak in no uncertain language to the *Leipzig*. Her object was to endeavour to outrange that ship "and thus cause her to alter her course and give the *Cornwall* and the *Kent* a chance of coming into action."

About 7.15 the *Leipzig* was *hors de combat*—"on fire from stem to stern and like a sieve," says a sailor on the *Cornwall*—although she remained afloat until 9 o'clock. When the signal officer of the *Glasgow* shouted out that a wireless had been received from the Admiral, saying that both the *Scharnhorst* and the

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Gneisenau were sunk, so loud were the cheers that the enemy must have understood what had happened.

Those who manned the *Glasgow's* boats beheld an awful sight. "She was like a glowing furnace, and as it was getting dark it showed up more," says one of the seamen. "We played our searchlights on her, and we could see some men up the only mast standing. She gave three slight heaves to port and then turned completely upside down, sinking with only just a hiss of steam and a bubble. The men remaining jumped over the side and we picked them up. We got five officers and eleven men, and the *Cornwall* one officer and three men, all that were left of 368."

Meanwhile the *Kent* had fixed her grip on the *Nürnberg* after a long chase, for the enemy ship was the faster of the two. Yet the 'black squad' managed by dint of extraordinary exertions to work up her engines to a couple of knots above their designed speed, and thus gradually overtook the retreating cruiser. Ladders were hacked to pieces, every available door and fitting, armchair and table was broken up to provide fuel for the furnaces. Within an hour and a half the *Kent* had brought her antagonist to a standstill and set her on fire. "It was a single-ship action," says the captain, "as no other ship was in sight at the time. The chase commenced at noon and the action commenced at 5 p.m. After a sharp action, during which the *Kent* was struck by the enemy's shell no less than thirty-six times, the *Nürnberg* sank at 7.26 p.m. . . . From the time the enemy was sighted until the end of the action the behaviour of the officers and men of the *Kent* was perfectly magnificent." The German ensign was hauled down, yet a little group of men waved a flag

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as she took the plunge. Captain Schönberg is reported to have said at Honolulu: "The *Nürnberg* will very likely be our coffin, but we are ready to fight to the last." Of the twelve men rescued only seven survived, while the *Kent* had four killed and twelve wounded. A cause of much grief on the part of the crew was the loss of the ship's pet canary. It disappeared, cage and all. The silk ensign presented by the county after which the cruiser was named was reduced to ribbons.

It was on this ship that Sergeant Charles Mayes performed a splendid act of bravery, for which he was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal. The deed is thus set forth in *The London Gazette*: "A shell burst and ignited some cordite charges in the casemate; a flash of flame went down the hoist into the ammunition passage. Sergeant Mayes picked up a charge of cordite and threw it away. He then got hold of a hose-pipe and flooded the compartment, extinguishing the fire in some empty shell-bags which were burning. The extinction of this fire saved a disaster which might have led to the loss of the ship."

In his dispatch to the Admiralty Sir Frederick Sturdee pays a well-deserved tribute to the British crews. "I have pleasure," he says, "in reporting that the officers and men under my orders carried out their duties with admirable efficiency and coolness, and great credit is due to the Engineer Officers of all the ships, several of which exceeded their normal full speed."

A stoker on the *Kent* not only underwent the trying experiences of the Falkland Islands battle, but had been in the *Oravia* when she was lost, in the *Olympic* when she collided with the evil-starred *Hawke*, only

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just missed sailing in the *Titanic* because of illness, and was one of the crew of the *Pathfinder*, which was sunk by a submarine on the 5th of the previous September. The total British casualties amounted to seven killed and twelve wounded. No officers were killed or wounded. The Germans lost nearly 2,200 officers and men.

Toward the end of the afternoon the weather changed. The sky became overcast and cloudy, the sea choppy. Moreover, the visibility was much reduced, and under cover of the gathering darkness the *Dresden* managed to escape. She remained at large until the 14th of the following March. In avoiding capture she proved herself entirely worthy of her sister ship, the *Emden*, although she did nothing like the amount of damage, and when she was at last cornered she put up but a half-hearted fight. She was caught by the *Glasgow*, the *Kent*, and the auxiliary cruiser *Orama* near Juan Fernandez Island. The action was one of the shortest on record. It lasted five minutes. The *Dresden* then hauled down her colours and displayed the white flag. Shortly after the crew had left their ship her magazine exploded and she disappeared. Fifteen badly wounded Germans were landed at Valparaiso, the remainder of the crew being conveyed in a Chilian cruiser to the Quiriquina Islands, north of Coronel. A pig from the *Dresden* became the mascot of one of the British warships, and was duly decorated with a cardboard replica of the Iron Cross.

The action was afterward made the subject of protest on the part of the Chilian Government. It was pointed out that the *Dresden* had put in at Juan Fernandez to repair, her commander requesting that

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she might be allowed eight days for the purpose. He was given twenty-four hours in which to leave, and as he did not go he was notified by the Maritime Governor that his ship would be interned. At this juncture the British ships arrived, and when she was ordered to surrender the crew blew up the magazine.

Sir Edward Grey answered that so far as his information went "the *Dresden* had not accepted internment, and still had her colours flying and her guns trained," which probably led the captain of the *Glasgow* to assume, "especially in view of the past action of the *Dresden*, that she was defying the Chilian authorities and abusing Chilian neutrality, and was only awaiting a favourable opportunity to sally out and attack British commerce again." At the same time his Majesty's Government offered a full and ample apology. It was afterward stated unofficially that the action took place about twelve miles off Robinson Crusoe's island.

The King sent a message to the Admiral and the officers and men under his command, congratulating them on their victory, General French offered the felicitations of the Army in France, the Board of Admiralty wired their thanks. To the felicitations of Vice-Admiral R. Yashiro, the Japanese Minister of Marine, Mr Winston Churchill replied at some length. The First Lord made it evident that had von Spee turned westward again the victory would doubtless have fallen to the Japanese and Australian squadrons, which were coming from the north in the general combination.

"With the sinking of *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Leipzig*, and *Nürnberg*," he said, "the whole of the German squadron based on Tsingtau at the outbreak

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of the war has been destroyed, and that base itself reduced and captured.¹ This event marks the conclusion of the active operations in which the Allied fleets have been engaged in the Pacific for more than four months, and though it has fallen to a British squadron in the South Atlantic to strike the final blow, it is largely owing to the powerful and untiring assistance rendered by the Japanese Fleet that this result has been achieved."

Addressing the House of Commons, Mr Winston Churchill referred to the battle off the Falkland Islands as "a memorable event, the relief and advantage of which will only be fully appreciated by those who have full knowledge of all that has taken place. The strain in the early months of the war has been greatly diminished now by the abatement of distant convoy work and by the clearance of the enemy's flag from the seas and oceans. There were times when, for instance, the great Australian convoy of sixty ships was crossing the Indian Ocean, or the great Canadian convoy of forty ships, with its protecting squadrons, was crossing the Atlantic, or when the regular flow of large Indian convoys of forty or fifty ships sailing in company was at its height both ways; when there was a powerful German cruiser squadron still at large in the Pacific or the Atlantic, which had to be watched for or waited for in superior force in six or seven different parts of the world at once, and when all the time, within a few hours' steam of our own shores, there was concentrated a hostile fleet which many have argued in former times was little inferior to our own, when there was hardly a regular soldier left at home, and before the Territorial

¹ Tsingtau fell on November 7, 1914.

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Force and the new armies had attained their present high efficiency and power—there were times when our naval resources, considerable as they are, were drawn upon to their utmost limit. But the victory at the Falkland Islands swept all these difficulties out of existence; it set free a large force of cruisers and battleships for all purposes; it opened the way to other operations of great interest. It enabled a much stricter control and more constant outlook to be maintained in home waters, and it almost entirely freed the outer seas of danger."

The long elephantine stretch of land known territorially as Chile and Argentina, with the tip of its trunk marked by Cape Horn and its mouth by the Rio de la Plata, became suddenly important to every Briton in the closing months of the year of the Great Betrayal. It seemed to be altogether beyond the range of the conflict; yet Coronel on the one side, and the Falkland Islands on the other, developed into something more than mere geographical expressions, meaningless enough to the average man. From them a British defeat and a British victory took their names. Until the sea gives up its dead Sir John Cradock and his comrades will repose in the waters of the Pacific, while the waves of the South Atlantic will swing to and fro like grass before the wind above the graves of Count von Spee and the men who helped him to vanquish his foe and were so speedily vanquished themselves.

CHAPTER XXVII

Commerce-destroying on the High Seas

Our Navy kept the seas. Without the Navy and the Mercantile Marine the war would have been over in six months. We should have collapsed.

D. LLOYD GEORGE

THE High Sea Fleet put forth little or no effort to safeguard German commerce. The gross tonnage of enemy merchant-ships of over 500 gross tons captured by Great Britain and condemned during the war was 322,202. In addition 319,316 gross tons of enemy ships were detained. Most of the vessels which escaped did so by seeking refuge in neutral ports. In far-distant waters, as we have already noted, several cruisers did considerable damage before they were rounded up, and from time to time raiders played havoc on the trade-routes, as well as submarines.

On August 6, 1914, there slipped out of the harbour of Tsingtau a certain German light cruiser of 3,650 tons. During the following three months the extraordinary exploits of H.I.G.M.S. *Emden* amazed newspaper readers of both hemispheres, annoyed excessively the commanding officers of various Australian, British, French, Russian, and Japanese men-of-war, whose vigilance she eluded, tried the nerves of ship-owners whose vessels plied in Eastern waters, and plundered the pockets of many an underwriter.

In addition to being a skilful seaman, Captain Karl

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von Müller possessed a fund of robust humour which stood him in good stead, for he frankly admitted on more than one occasion that he was well aware that a long career was not to be expected. It was a clear case of 'a short life and a merry one,' as subsequent events proved. In one respect he was greatly favoured by fortune. He had on board a certain Lieutenant Meyer, who had served in Hamburg - Amerika liners running to India, and whose knowledge of the waters must have helped very considerably.

It has also been suggested that Müller may have studied to advantage the career of Robert Surcouf, who performed many feats as a privateer in the Indian seas. Surcouf, however, usually turned his prizes into cash by sending them into Mauritius, which then belonged to the French, whereas Müller had no advantage of the kind open to him.

The way in which the *Emden* managed to escape from the neighbourhood of Tsingtau, the seaport of the German settlement of Kiao-chau, on the Yellow Sea, reads like an extract from one of the chapters of Max Pemberton's well-known *Iron Pirate*. The story, as based on the narrative of Meyer, is this. In the immediate vicinity was a Japanese armoured cruiser which was a most inconvenient neighbour to have. The *Emden* was therefore painted the colour of vessels of the British Navy. Then, at the suggestion of the chief engineer, who entered into the spirit of the great adventure in the schoolboy fashion of the captain, a dummy funnel was rigged up. The addition of a White Ensign at the stern completed her disguise so far as it was possible to do so. The question was whether the officers of the aforementioned cruiser would notice anything suspicious. Seeing

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that they were not British, and consequently less familiar with the lines of the light cruisers of our Navy, there was just a chance that the transformed *Emden* would escape.

The bluff worked admirably. As the *Emden* steamed past the cruiser the gallant little Japanese lined the decks and the ensigns of each were duly dipped, as custom and international courtesy ordain. The Germans even ventured on giving three British cheers. Then the *Emden* gradually receded in the distance and disappeared. For six weeks she was completely lost. During that time lack of news gave ample scope for rumour. It was asserted that the *Emden* had been in action with the Russian cruiser *Askold*, and that both had sunk as a result. In these things Rumour lied.

During the three months of her feverish existence as a commerce-raider, comparable in some degree with that of the *Alabama* of American Civil War fame, the *Emden* captured or sank ships and cargoes calculated to be worth somewhere between £2,000,000 and £4,000,000 sterling. Her victims numbered twenty-three, including a Russian cruiser and a French torpedo-boat destroyer. She must have travelled many thousands of miles during her "crowded hour of glorious life." More than once she was sighted by British cruisers, but on each occasion her speed of 24 knots enabled her to escape. Napoleon believed that war should support war; Captain von Müller either had to enforce the principle or perish. With her bunkers crammed to their utmost capacity, the *Emden* could only take 850 tons of coal, and her crew of 361 officers and men had to be fed. Now it is fairly obvious that she could not

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afford to be sparing of her use of motive power, because speed was her greatest asset, and it was impossible for her to carry sufficient provisions to last for the three months she was at liberty. Consequently war *had* to support war. Müller and his merry men had to live on their captives.

This modern corsair was launched and completed in 1909 at Danzig dockyard. For a vessel of her size her armament was good, for she carried ten 4·1-inch quick-firers, eight 5-pdr. guns, and two submerged torpedo-tubes. Her protection was a 2-inch steel deck over the boiler and engine spaces. Seen from a distance she looked like a travelling factory, for her funnels were very tall.

To scour the seas for this very modern and substantial *Flying Dutchman* was an exceedingly difficult matter, and the fact that she disappeared for weeks together is no reflection on those whose duty it was to destroy her. Compared with the immense area to be covered, the North Sea was a mere lake, and the sheltered bays and islets in which she could hide were many and varied.

She tapped wireless messages, thus securing information of the utmost service to her, and it has been suggested that she also received help from certain German Protestant missions in Southern India or the Western Ghauts, and the island of Pulo Weh, north of Sumatra. A small German sailing-vessel called the *Comet*, captured by the Australian Navy, was found to have on board a complete wireless telegraph installation which it is quite possible assisted the *Emden*. She used her own apparatus to good effect by sending out calls which lured British merchantmen to their doom.

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The *Emden's* preliminary depredations took place in the Bay of Bengal between the 10th and the 14th of September, when she sank five vessels varying from 3,544 tons to 7,615 tons which had set out from the Hugli, and captured a sixth, the *Kabinga*. It is significant that it was generally understood that transports with the Indian contingent on board would leave about this time.

Karl von Müller carried out his warfare in no cold-blooded-murder fashion. The crews of the unfortunate ships were always allowed to take to the boats, or some other suitable provision was made for their safety, and they were invariably treated in a courteous way. On this particular occasion, or rather series of occasions, the sixth vessel was released because the captain's wife was on board, and Müller had not the heart to send a woman off in an open boat in rough weather.

This, at any rate, was the explanation made by the gallant Müller. According to the lady most concerned, when a shot was fired across the vessel's bows it was thought that the pursuing vessel was a British cruiser. The captain and his wife were made prisoners and thirty men stationed on the *Kabinga*. She was compelled to follow in the track of the German warship for forty-eight hours, and was then released. "The German officers treated us well, and were gentlemen," says the witness. In the interim the Harrison liner *Diplomat*, on her homeward voyage to Liverpool, had also been sighted by the *Emden* and forced to stop, the passengers being removed to the *Kabinga*, with those of the other ships. Five shots were fired at the *Diplomat*, and eventually she disappeared from mortal ken, plunging bows forward into the deep.

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"The German commander," writes the captain of the *Kabinga* in his official report, "warned me to approach the Hugli with caution, as the pilots were off station, the lightships and buoys removed, he having heard Calcutta giving the pilot these instructions by wireless. My wireless installation was wrecked as soon as I was captured, but they overlooked the fact that we had spare wire on board for new aerials, and that the installations worked from the ship's dynamo. They threw the accumulators away, thinking the Marconi set was then finished. We rigged new wires as soon as possible, and the Marconi operators repaired the machinery, and on the 15th I got into communication with Calcutta." Upon arrival at that port the *Kabinga* had some four hundred souls aboard.

The next victim was the liner *Clan Matheson*, which was sunk a few days after the encounter with the *Kabinga*.

The enterprising commander of the *Emden* now varied his adventures by shelling Madras, the only city of importance on the east coast of India that lay open to him. Like the raids on Yarmouth and Hartlepool, it was a case of doing the maximum of damage in the minimum of time, because of the possibility of the naval hounds catching the naval hare. Still, Captain von Müller showed considerable intrepidity in steaming under cover of night into the roads, finding the position of the great oil-tanks with the aid of his searchlights, and coolly bombarding the city for a quarter of an hour. Apparently the main idea was to shell the tanks in the hope that the blazing liquid would escape and set fire to the adjacent buildings, thus involving the capital of the presidency.

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The first two shells struck the steamer *Chupra*, a vessel of 6,175 tons owned by the British India Steam Navigation Company, which happened to be directly in the line of fire. The third shell hit the bungalow of the manager of the Burma Oil Company, and wrecked a bedroom. Fortunately the family got away, although they narrowly escaped death from another shell that burst near them, killing the durwan. Another fell near a native policeman, and so great was the concussion that his body was subsequently recovered from the harbour. A poor little child walking by the side of the tramway was killed by a fragment of shell, and the surgical ward of the Varendas Hospital was struck. An iron bogie wagon near by was so punctured by splinters of flying steel that it looked like a giant sieve on wheels, and the telegraph-office and the Seamen's Club House were also hit. By this time two of the huge kerosene oil tanks were alight, but by great good fortune those containing petrol were missed; otherwise a most disastrous tragedy would have ensued. The guns of Fort George opened against the hostile ship, but certainly failed to do material damage to her. In the circumstances the work of the gun-layers on the *Emden* was excellent. Very soon the buildings of the city stood up like gaunt ghosts as the lurid flames, fed by a million and a half gallons of oil, reached higher and higher until they were visible for a hundred miles, and above all rolled a dense black cloud that slowly coiled up from the blazing tanks and formed a mammoth drop-curtain. According to one correspondent there was no commotion in Madras, while another has it that there was "frightful excitement" on the part of the natives, many of whom fled from

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what they doubtless regarded as a doomed city. Others, whose curiosity got the better of fear, lined the beach and coolly watched the flash of the guns from the fort and the ship. In fifteen minutes the *Emden* managed to do £50,000 worth of damage.

The bombardment of Madras took place on September 22nd. On the following day information was received of the occurrence by H.M.S. *Hampshire*. On the 25th, when the same cruiser was nearing Madras, she ascertained that the enemy was off the French settlement of Pondicherry. Here also she fired a few shots, and yet again Dame Fortune favoured her, for the *Hampshire* arrived off the port just two hours after the will-o'-the-wisp of the Indian Ocean had left. That the cruiser only just missed her quarry is proved by the statement of the captain of one of the prizes, who was informed that on one occasion the commanding officer of the *Emden* ascertained by means of wireless messages that the *Hampshire* was eight miles distant.

Looking for the proverbial needle in a pottle of hay was mere child's play compared to the task of the Allied commanders, particularly as it was the season of the mist-making monsoon. "We have been right south in the heat, and now we are shivering," writes a bugler in a British cruiser which missed the *Emden* by a matter of ten miles. On this occasion, and in company with two other ships, a bold attempt was made to come within range of the rover. Everything was going well when a fog came on, and that was the end of the chase. On this particular occasion the fugitive was accompanied by three colliers.

In the last week of September half a dozen vessels,

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aggregating over 24,000 tons, fell to the prowess of the intrepid Müller. Of these, four were sent to the bottom of the Indian Ocean, one was released for the purpose of taking the crews of the others to Colombo, and a collier was retained for fairly obvious reasons. Fortunately three of the prizes were in ballast, but another, the *Tymeric*, was making her way from Java to Falmouth with a valuable cargo of sugar.

Previous to their release the officers and men of the captured ships were treated with much kindness on board the *Emden*. No lights were allowed in their cabins at night—a wise precaution to prevent the possibility of signalling—but the men were given opportunities for recreation during the day. A steward apologized for bringing pancakes and ham for breakfast, and the prisoners were further regaled with a performance of the band on Sunday.

The *Emden's* usual procedure in securing her prey was to signal "Stop!" and then to send an armed crew aboard. After the ship's papers had been examined, the vessel was searched for provisions and any articles that the *Emden* happened to be requiring. Sometimes the crew were given ten minutes to get their belongings together, occasionally half an hour. "It is the fortune of war, captain," was the apology of the officer who boarded the S.S. *Riberia* a couple of hundred miles west of Colombo. Another officer expressed the hope that when the *Emden* was captured it would be by a British ship. "But we shall run," he declared; "we are not built for fighting." The captain was very sparing of his torpedoes, and usually sent his captures to Davy Jones's locker by placing mines in them and opening the sea-cocks. The treatment was always effective. "The vessel's

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sides were blown out," says Captain D. Harris of the *King Lud*, whose ship was destroyed by the former method.

It must not be inferred that the raider captured every ship plying on the trade-route. She missed several very rich prizes, including a Brocklebank liner. Captain Giacapello, of the Italian steamer *Loredano*, was stopped by the raider, and when released he at once warned several ships and transports, thus enabling them to escape. For the services thus rendered Captain Giacapello was presented with a gold watch and chain by Lord Carmichael, Governor of Bengal; mementoes were also given to the officers of his ship, and cash rewards to the crew.

A remarkable escape was that of the French Messageries Maritimes steamer *Paul Lecat*. She received a wireless telling her to change her course and steam in a given direction so as to avoid meeting the German cruiser. Owing to a slight error in the signal the captain was suspicious and proceeded on his way. Had he heeded the instruction he would have fallen into the *Emden's* trap.

On or about October 15th H.M.S. *Yarmouth*, commanded by Captain Henry L. Cochrane, captured two of the raider's colliers, the *Markomannia* and the *Pontoporos*, the former a Hamburg-Amerika liner of 4,504 tons and the latter a Greek vessel of 4,049 tons, off the Sumatra coast, but again the elusive *Emden* escaped.

Five days later seven more vessels fell into her net, including a second steamer of the Clan Line and a poor little dredger of 473 tons that was laboriously making her way to Tasmania. Three of these prizes were brand-new ships, and only two of the seven

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were allowed to remain afloat—namely, the *Exford* of 4,542 tons and the *Saint Egbert* of 5,596 tons. It was a rich haul, particularly as the former was carrying a cargo of the best Welsh steam-coal for British war-ships, but the victims were destined to be the last of the ships flying the red ensign that were to fall prey to the *Emden*.

Having rigged up the *Emden's* dummy funnel once more, and made one or two other disguises, von Müller prepared for a yet greater effort. He determined to make a raid on Penang, one of the colonies of the Straits Settlements. This port was used as a base by H.M.S. *Yarmouth*, and although he does not appear to have hoped that the *Emden* would be mistaken for that vessel, the disguise was so clever that an observer on the shore candidly admitted that he was deceived and thought it was the British cruiser. The time chosen by von Müller was the breaking of dawn, when there was just enough light for him to see what he was doing and probably insufficient for the patrol ships on the watch to distinguish his real nationality. Boldness was essential, and that had ever been associated with the captain's strategy.

A Russian cruiser, a small French gunboat, and two or three destroyers were lying in the roadstead. The *Emden* managed to get past the patrol boats, which took her for a vessel belonging to the Allied fleets. The light cruiser, rushing along at great speed, approached the Russian *Zhemtchug*, a third-class armoured cruiser of 3,130 tons built at Petrograd in 1904 and armed with half a dozen 4·7-inch quick-firing guns. According to the scanty official report of the Russian Admiralty, which tallies with a log kept by one of the German petty officers, the *Emden*

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opened fire with a torpedo which exploded near the *Zhemtchug's* bow, and on the latter bringing her guns into action a second torpedo sank the ship. An engineer on the steamer *Nigaristan*, which was lying in the harbour, positively asserts that two broadsides were fired into the cruiser that was taken at such grave disadvantage, and that the second broadside exploded the magazines. The evidence of another witness is to the same effect. The Russian report makes no mention of the gunfire of the *Emden*, whereas the German officer says that salvo after salvo—in all 100 shots—were hurled at the vessel, which testifies to the terrible pommelling that the *Zhemtchug* received.

On the *Emden's* return to the open sea the French destroyer *Mousquet*, which was on patrol duty, attempted to grapple with her. The *Mousquet* put up a gallant fight, and continued firing until she was sunk by the more powerful vessel. A shell that exploded on the bridge shot away both legs of Captain Therionne, who ordered his men to lash him to the deck and continued to command his little vessel. Thirty-six survivors were picked up by the *Emden's* boats, but three were so badly wounded that they died shortly afterward. Of the 250 officers and men saved from the Russian cruiser no fewer than 112 were wounded, and 85 of the crew perished.

The chase of the *Emden* was continued by a second destroyer after the sinking of the *Mousquet*. The light cruiser, however, soon outdistanced her pursuer.

The strain on the nerves of a commander who knows that his ship must be destroyed sooner or later, that every day may be his last and is certainly bringing him appreciably nearer to the inevitable

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finish, must be well-nigh intolerable. Yet we find the inexhaustible fund of humour bubbling up in Captain von Müller as it did in M. Adolphe Max, the Burgomaster of Brussels. For instance, great was the surprise of the wireless operator of H.M.S. *Yarmouth* to receive a call from the *Emden* one night while the British cruiser was engaged in escorting a ship from Singapore, which is at the extreme end of the Malay Peninsula, Penang being on the west coast. "Captain von Müller and the ward-room mess," ticked the instrument, "present their compliments, and would be obliged if the *Yarmouth* would let them have the result of the inter-regimental Rugby football match."

As was only to be expected, for Jack Tar keenly appreciates a joke, the result was duly sent across the intervening waters. Moreover, the message was concluded with the intimation that soon British sportsmen in the East would have the pleasure of the company of the captain of the *Emden* at all field and track events. By this time many stories had gathered about Karl von Müller. One had it that he had wirelessly to the pilot brig at the mouth of the Hugli that he would be delighted to carry the mails; another told how he had asked the commander of a vessel if he had heard anything of the *Emden*, and on being replied to in the negative answered: "Well, I am it."

Shortly after his visit to Penang Captain von Müller, so the tale goes, called at Diego Garcia, one of the Chagos Islands and a British possession. Very few people live there, the total population numbering about 540 people, of whom the odd forty are Europeans. Von Müller had two urgent necessities, namely, the taking in of coal and the removal of weeds

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and barnacles. The Englishman who interrogated the captain as to his *bona fides* was told that the *Emden* was carrying out manœuvres with the British Navy, which was perfectly true up to a certain point. There was a display of goodwill on either side, and as no one on the island was aware of the outbreak of war, no attempt was made to enlighten them. Von Müller merely vouchsafed the information that the Pope was dead. As Pius X had breathed his last on the 20th of the previous August this was not particularly up-to-date news. However, it sufficed. When asked about British politics von Müller adopted the official attitude by answering courteously but evasively.

On hearing that the motor-boat of the gentleman in question had broken down, the German commander at once sent a couple of engineers to repair it. The natives made his ship almost as bright as a new pin, coal was secured, and Captain von Müller showed his gratitude by paying for the labour involved and saying that he would be delighted to forward the delivery of any letters that might be entrusted to him. The Englishman then sent on board a bottle of wine and a box of cigars, doubtless thinking that he was not only giving pleasure to the recipient, but aiding the worthy cause of international brotherhood. With a farewell salute of her guns the *Emden* went on her way, and a little group of Imperialists stood and watched her as she receded in the blue distance.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Rounding up the "Emden"

Success covers a multitude of blunders.

NELSON

AFTER her daring and dramatic coup at Penang, involving the loss of two war-vessels, the *Emden* again disappeared for a time. It was her last raid and her final victory. British, French, Russian, and Japanese cruisers were busy 'sweeping' the sea, an immense area, it is true, but scarcely too vast to defeat the methodical plan pursued by the combined fleets. It was therefore evident that at no very distant date the *Emden* must be cornered. To which navy should fall the honour of ending her career would be decided rather by fortune than by tactics. As we shall see, the rounding up of the *Emden* was actually achieved when the 'sweeping' operations had been temporarily suspended in order to convoy transports.

"We need patience," wrote a philosophical sailor of H.M.S. *Hampshire*, who had not set foot on land for two months after leaving Hakodate, in Japan, and had chased "half round Asia" in pursuit of the German corsair. The *Emden* was not to fall to the *Hampshire*. She was, however, within an ace of being caught by the Japanese. One night, when the Australian and New Zealand contingents were only some fifty miles off Cocos Keeling Island, a

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message was received from our Eastern Allies warning the convoy that the enemy was in the vicinity. Every member of the Expeditionary Force on the armada of transports was ordered to don a lifebelt and line up on deck. The boats were swung out on the davits for instant service. Ammunition was served out to the guard. The cruisers cleared for action, the transports were ready with their light artillery to lend a hand should opportunity come, and one army officer erected a little barricade of sacks of flour and placed a Maxim gun behind it. His idea was that if the *Emden* came sufficiently close he might have an opportunity of raking the bridge. The lightning which flashed across the dark and sullen waters afforded the men a momentary gleam, Nature thereby disobeying the order of 'Lights out.' Yet it revealed nothing but sea and ships—their own ships. It was not an enviable experience, especially as the troops discarded every shred of clothing other than their trousers. Not one of them knew whether it would be the solitary *Emden* or von Spee's Pacific Squadron that might appear at any minute, but each cordially wished the disturbers of their peace at the bottom of the sea.

While they were standing thus, the silence broken only by the monotonous churning of the screws and the sigh of the sea, the dull roar of a distant gun was heard. There suddenly shot out of the darkness the still darker forms of three cruisers racing under forced draught in the direction from whence the low, reverberating boom had come. The tension was appalling even to men who knew not fear, for a soldier likes to get to grips with his enemy. It lasted until the first streaks of dawn stole across the sky. Later in the morning it was noised aboard that the

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elusive *Emden* was being chased by the wily *Sydney*. When it was known that the German corsair had at last met her doom, a holiday was proclaimed throughout the fleet.

It was then, and not till then, that the full significance of the Australian Navy was realized by those on board the transports. A few days later every thinking citizen of the British Empire praised the foresight of the colonial statesmen who had realized the immense importance of Sea-Power to the great southern continent. It was only so recently as 1909 that the Commonwealth had determined to have a fleet, which included in August 1914 one large battle-cruiser, four light cruisers, six destroyers, and two submarines. The wisdom of this decision was demonstrated by the splendid part played by these vessels in the opening phase of the World War. In addition to cornering the *Emden*, capturing German merchant-ships, and assisting in destroying enemy wireless stations, the Australian Navy took part in the search for von Spee's squadron.

Other important work was accomplished by the capture of various 'places in the sun' on which the German Emperor set such store. Following the seizure of the island of Nauru, the *Australia* and the *Melbourne* helped to convoy the New Zealand Expeditionary Force to Samoa, the lovely group of volcanic islands known as 'the gem of the Pacific,' and so long a bone of contention between Great Britain, Germany, and the United States. Lack of men precluding any idea of defence, the enemy surrendered without bloodshed. The bluejackets landed at Apia, the last home of Robert Louis Stevenson, on August 30th. On the next day, a little over

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fourteen years following the hoisting of the German colours, the Union Jack waved over the buildings of the late Imperial Government. This gave intense satisfaction to every son of Britain in the Commonwealth, for all were firmly convinced that when the Motherland renounced her claim to the islands in 1899 she committed a grave error of judgment. That blunder was now wiped off the slate.

Attention was next paid to the Bismarck Archipelago, which has an area of nearly 20,000 square miles. The preliminary operations began on September 11th, when a little band of twenty-five men set out to destroy a wireless station on the island of New Pommern (late New Britain). They were met by Germans and natives cleverly hidden in coco-nut palm trees, who drove them back, after killing an officer of the Army Medical Corps and a naval petty officer. A force six times as large was next landed near Herbertshöhe under Commander J. A. H. Beresford. "In proceeding," says the Admiralty dispatch, "its progress was stoutly opposed, and the party had to fight their way for four miles through the bush, the road being in many places mined." Half a dozen Germans and a number of natives had sought to protect the wireless station by digging themselves in. The colonials advanced without the slightest hesitation and charged with great gallantry, but it was not until late afternoon that the enemy surrendered.

"We found," says Commander Beresford, "that Herbertshöhe was splendidly prepared for defence. They had had two months to get ready, and their trenches and defences were in ideal positions. If the positions had been reversed, and we had been the

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defenders, Herbertshöhe would still be fighting. I don't think any force in the world could shift British defenders from such a position as the German officers and native troops had provided.

"We had taken the first line of trenches and advanced upon the second when a flag of truce appeared, and a German officer with an orderly came up to ask me what terms he could get for surrender. The orderly acted as an interpreter. I have since found out that the German officer understands English as well as I do myself. I had already written out the terms—unconditional surrender of all forces and arms. There was forty minutes' parleying, with altogether too much German for me. At last I pulled out my watch and gave him five minutes to sign 'Surrender.' I like that man. He's one of the coolest soldiers I've ever met. He talked German to his interpreter for exactly four minutes, and then he signed 'Surrender.'" Rabaul, the capital, was occupied without difficulty, but at Toma, in the mountains, the Germans did not propose to give in so easily. One of the warships therefore shelled the position, in much the same way as the British squadron paved the way for the landing of troops in Gallipoli. The advance of the troops was made under a blazing sun which added immeasurably to the difficulties of the march, but on storming the trenches it was found that the enemy had vacated them. Shortly afterward a white flag was shown and the Germans surrendered. Before steaming into Rabaul harbour, it was supposed that four German cruisers were there coaling, and the *Sydney* therefore prepared to dash in under cover of night and torpedo them. It was afterward ascertained that the ships had left the day before.

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In the last week of September the town and harbour of Friedrich Wilhelm, the seat of government of Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, German New Guinea, was occupied.

Again the apparently endless search of the vast Pacific was recommenced. Sometimes suspicious-looking smoke would be seen on the horizon, but never a sign of the quarry, and occasionally the wireless would catch German messages. After running many thousands of miles, the Australian fleet was ordered south to take part in the task of convoying the patriotic colonists who had so wholeheartedly rallied to the Empire's call. Perhaps the activities of the fleet will be better appreciated by the reader when he is told that after four months' work the men were given four hours' leave.

At this point we again come in touch with the *Emden*, one of whose officers subsequently stated that no one on board had the least idea that transports were in the vicinity, so well had the authorities guarded the secret of their movements. First of all let us read the official report of Captain John C. T. Glossop, of H.M.A.S. *Sydney*, who was well acquainted with southern waters. As a midshipman he had experienced the terrible hurricane at Apia in 1889, and played his part in the splendid seamanship which enabled H.M.S. *Calliope* to escape from the harbour and ride the gale in the open sea. The *Sydney*, it should be noted, is a light cruiser of 5,400 tons, with a speed of 25·5 knots, an armament of eight 6-inch guns, four 3-pdr. quick-firing guns, and two submerged torpedo-tubes. She was completed at Birkenhead in 1912.

"1. Whilst on escort duty with the convoy under

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the charge of Captain Silver, H.M.A.S. *Melbourne*, at 6.30 a.m. on Monday, 9th November," says Captain Glossop, "a wireless message from Cocos was heard reporting that a foreign warship was off the entrance. I was ordered to raise steam for full speed at 7.0 a.m., and proceed thither. I worked up to 20 knots, and at 9.15 a.m. sighted land ahead and almost immediately the smoke of a ship which proved to be H.I.G.M.S. *Emden* coming out toward me at a great rate. At 9.40 a.m. fire was opened, she firing the first shot. I kept my distance as much as possible to obtain the advantage of my guns. Her fire was very accurate and rapid to begin with, but seemed to slacken very quickly, all casualties occurring in this ship almost immediately. First the foremost funnel of her went, secondly the foremast, and she was badly on fire aft, then the second funnel went, and lastly the third funnel, and I saw she was making for the beach on North Keeling Island, where she grounded at 11.20 a.m. I gave her two more broadsides and left her to pursue a merchant-ship which had come up during the action.

"2. Although I had guns on this merchant-ship at odd times during the action, I had not fired, and as she was making off fast I pursued and overtook her at 12.10, firing a gun across her bows, and hoisting International Code Signal to stop, which she did. I sent an armed boat and found her to be the S.S. *Buresk*, a captured British collier with 18 Chinese crew, 1 English steward, 1 Norwegian cook, and a German prize crew of 3 officers, 1 warrant officer, and 12 men. The ship unfortunately was sinking, the Kingston valve knocked out and damaged to prevent repairing, so I took all on board, fired four



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shells into her, and returned to the *Emden*, passing men swimming in the water, for whom I left two boats I was towing from the *Buresk*.

"3. On arriving again off the *Emden* she still had her colours up at mainmast head. I inquired by signal, International Code, 'Will you surrender?' and received a reply in Morse 'What signal? No signal books.' I then made in Morse 'Do you surrender?' and subsequently 'Have you received my signal?' to neither of which did I get an answer. The German officers on board gave me to understand that the captain would never surrender, and therefore, though very reluctantly, I again fired at her at 4.30 p.m., ceasing at 4.35, as she showed white flags and hauled down her ensign by sending a man aloft.

"4. I then left the *Emden* and returned and picked up the *Buresk's* two boats, rescuing two sailors (5.0 p.m.) who had been in the water all day. I returned and sent in one boat to the *Emden*, manned by her own prize crew from the *Buresk*, and one officer, and stating I would return to their assistance next morning.

"5. I lay on and off all night and communicated with Direction Island at 8.0 a.m., 10th November, to find that the *Emden's* party, consisting of 3 officers and 40 men, one launch and two cutters, had seized and provisioned a 70 tons schooner (the *Ayesha*), having four Maxims with two belts to each. They left the previous night at six o'clock. The wireless station was entirely destroyed, one cable cut, one damaged, and one intact. I borrowed a doctor and two assistants, and proceeded as fast as possible to the *Emden's* assistance.

"6. I sent an officer on board to see the captain, and in view of the large number of prisoners and

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wounded and lack of accommodation, etc., in this ship, and the absolute impossibility of leaving them where they were, he agreed that if I received his officers and men and all wounded 'then as for such time as they remained in the *Sydney* they would cause no interference with ship or fittings, and would be amenable to the ship's discipline.' I therefore set to work at once to tranship them—a most difficult operation, the ships being on weather side of island and the send alongside very heavy. The conditions in the *Emden* were indescribable. I received the last from her at 5.6. p.m., then had to go round to the leese side to pick up 20 more men who had managed to get ashore from the ship.

"7. Darkness came on before this could be accomplished, and the ship again stood off and on all night, renewing operations at 5 a.m. on 11th November, a cutter's crew having to land with stretchers to bring wounded round to embarking point. A German officer, a doctor, died ashore the previous day. The ship in the meantime ran over to Direction Island to return their doctor and assistants, send cables, and was back again at 10 a.m., embarked the remainder of wounded, and proceeded for Colombo by 10.35 a.m., Wednesday, 11th November.

"8. Total casualties in the *Sydney*: Killed, 3; severely wounded (since dead) 1; severely wounded, 4; wounded, 4; slightly wounded, 4. In the *Emden* I can only approximately state the killed at 7 officers and 108 men from captain's statement. I had on board 11 officers, 9 warrant officers, and 191 men, of whom 3 officers and 53 men were wounded, and of this number 1 officer and 3 men have since died of wounds.

"9. The damage to the *Sydney's* hull and fittings

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was surprisingly small; in all about ten hits seem to have been made. The engine and boiler rooms and funnels escaped entirely.

"10. I have great pleasure in stating that the behaviour of the ship's company was excellent in every way, and with such a large proportion of young hands and people under training it is all the more gratifying."

An official document does not give much scope for romance, but there is plenty in connexion with the destruction of the *Emden*. Captain Glossop, for instance, makes no reference in his dispatch, as published, to the splendid work of the cable operators of the Eastern Telegraph Company at Singapore and on Cocos Island.

Early on the morning of November 9th the operator at Singapore was in communication with Cocos Island. Everything was working well, when the dull monotony of gathering more or less uninteresting information was broken by the receipt of a sentence of half a dozen words that were destined to have far-reaching consequences. The message ran: "*Emden* at Cocos landing armed party." Then the instrument was silent, and although the operator at Singapore endeavoured to get more news there was no response. Evidently there was a 'break,' or the cable had been cut, or something tragic had happened to the man at the other end. An old mirror instrument was set working some hours later, and brought a reply from the island. Then the dread secret of the silence was revealed. "Been unable to communicate. Everything smashed. No light. Will get an instrument up at daylight. Report us all well. *Emden* engaged by British cruiser. Result unknown. Landing party commandeered schooner *Ayesha*. Good-night."

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When the *Emden* was sighted off the island the telegraph staff at once suspected a visit from the celebrated corsair, of which they had heard a great deal but had never seen. The dummy funnel which had been so exceedingly useful proved to be her undoing. Somehow or other on this particular occasion it did not look the part. It appeared to be rather a product of the carpenter's craft than of the engineer's skill. More significant still, no ensign was visible. With praiseworthy promptitude one of the assistants at once sent by wireless a signal of distress and brief particulars of the case in the hope that a naval ship might pick it up, while another man dispatched the message given above to Singapore. A launch armed with four Maxim guns, and accompanied by two boats, having on board three officers and forty men of the *Emden*, shortly afterward reached the beach, but before they destroyed the instruments and wrecked the wireless installation H.M.S. *Minotaur* had received the marconigram. The *Melbourne* also appears to have picked it up, and the captain detached the *Sydney*, which was a faster ship, to secure the coveted prize. This was a noble thing to do, for Captain Silver would have been quite within his province had he proceeded in the *Melbourne* and brought von Müller to action.

No sooner had the landing party under the command of Captain-Lieutenant von Mücke secured the knives and fire-arms of the staff and finished their destructive work than the cruiser *Sydney* was seen approaching, and the *Emden* got under way to meet her. It became a case of *saue qui peut* so far as the Germans on the island were concerned. Within easy distance of the shore was the schooner *Ayesha*, the property of Mr Clunies-Ross, the owner of the islands.

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They rowed out to her, asked a few questions of the captain, ascertained what there was on board, and returned to shore. A little later they boarded the ship for a second time, and politely informed the crew that they had twenty minutes to pack up their belongings and leave. Labouring under the erroneous idea that sailors of the British Mercantile Marine wore white clothes, all articles answering to that description were commandeered, likewise the navigating gear and other nautical articles likely to be of service to them in their endeavour to escape. The crew had no alternative but to obey without unnecessary delay. One cannot argue with a bayonet. They were escorted back to the island and made prisoners of war, together with the telegraph staff. Then all were marched to a boat-shed and placed under guard, while the remainder of the Germans rifled the stores and generally prepared for their forthcoming voyage. In addition to food and water they helped themselves to various articles, including pistols and cartridges, cutlery, watches, knives, razors, tobacco, clothes, prism-glasses, cigarette-cases, and a camera, the total value being estimated at over £160. A pirates' haul in very truth!

Having made all snug on board the *Ayesha*, the Germans remained in possession of the island until it was conclusively proved to them that the *Emden* was getting decidedly the worst of her encounter with the Australian cruiser. In the gathering dusk they hoisted sail, fervently hoping that under cover of night they would be able to steal away without attracting the attention of too-vigilant officers of any British man-of-war that might be in the vicinity.

When the prisoners in the boat-house broke out of

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their gaol they tore down the German ensign that fluttered above them and congratulated themselves on the knowledge that the little schooner was in a very leaky condition and both her pumps were out of order. The crew of forty-three managed to patch her up, for on the 28th of the following month it was reported that she visited Padang, a port on the southwest coast of Sumatra, and obtained further supplies by raiding the stores of a Dutch telegraph station. Eventually the Captain-Lieutenant and his little band made their way to the Red Sea port of Hodeidah, where they discarded the *Ayesha*. After a terrible march across country and conflicts with unfriendly Arabs, as a result of which they suffered several casualties, the little band arrived at Jeddah, where the wounded were placed in hospital. In due course they reached Bagdad, and got on to the Anatolian Railway and so to Haidar Pasha, whence they were conveyed by a destroyer to Seraglio Point. Their appearance at Constantinople naturally aroused considerable enthusiasm among the Turks; we hear of them parading through the streets with a guard of honour, and then lose sight of them on board a German steamer, where they took up their quarters.

As soon as the *Emden* got under way she opened fire at the *Sydney* and steamed north at top speed. Her shooting, as Captain Glossop avers, was "very accurate," a statement borne out by an eyewitness on land. The first shell to strike the *Sydney* penetrated the deck before exploding, wounding several of the crew. The *Emden* also had the good fortune to put her opponent's main range-finder out of action and to damage the after fire-control station, wounding all the men there. Very few of the *Emden*'s shells did

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serious damage, although one exploded in the boys' mess, but any danger of fire was removed by the water thrown up by the bow, which poured through the shot-hole and soon flooded that portion of the vessel.

Meanwhile the gun-layers of the *Sydney* had got to work. "About the third salvo of our chaps," says an engine-room artificer of the Australian cruiser, "brought down one of the funnels of the *Emden*, and tore away all the after part of her deck, and, luckily for us, flooded the submarine flat where her torpedoes were kept. We were engaged hot and strong about two hours, and the greatest credit is due to our skipper, who manœuvred the ship splendidly. We were steaming about 27 knots, and it was not long before we silenced the *Emden's* guns one by one until there was but one left. But her crew were very game, and used that one until all her ammunition was gone and she started to sink, so the only hope they had was to run her aground on the island."

Von Müller, in his account of the battle, states that at first "our marksmanship was good, but soon the heavy British guns gained the upper hand, inflicting heavy losses among our gunners. As we were short of ammunition," he adds, "we were obliged to cease firing." The real truth of the matter is that they were short of guns; for several had been put out of action. By skilfully manœuvring his vessel so as to keep out of the *Emden's* range, in the performance of which he covered a distance of nearly sixty miles, Captain Glossop used his superior weight of metal, his longer range, and his speed to the greatest possible advantage. Von Müller attempted to get sufficiently close to use his torpedoes,

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but was foiled. The *Sydney's* broadside of 500 lb. crashed into the corsair again and again, until she was forced to run ashore to prevent going down with all hands. It has been stated that she took the ground when steaming at 19 knots, and that the jar was so terrific that the man at the wheel was killed instantly by being flung against it.

According to an officer on the *Sydney*, whose account of the action appeared in *The Times*, the hottest part of the battle for those on the Australian cruiser was the first thirty minutes. The first shot to do serious damage struck the vessel close to No. 2 starboard gun, knocking out "practically the whole of that gun's crew." Then a cordite fire started, but was fortunately got under by the hose that is always in evidence when a ship is in action. "Our hits were not very serious," the officer says. "We were 'hulled' in about three places. The shell that exploded in the boys' mess-deck, apart from ruining the poor little beggars' clothes, provided a magnificent stock of trophies. For two or three days they kept finding fresh pieces. The only important damage was the after control-platform, which is one mass of gaping holes and tangled iron, and the foremost range-finder shot away. Other hits, though 'interesting, don't signify.'"

Perhaps the most entertaining part of the same breezy letter is that dealing with the *Emden* as they found her on the following day, November 10th. "At 11.10 a.m.," we read, "we arrived off the *Emden* again. I was sent over to her in one of the cutters. Luckily her stern was sticking out beyond where the surf broke, so that with a rope from the stern of the ship one could ride close under one quarter, with the

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boat's bow to seaward. The rollers were very big, and the surging to and fro and so on made getting aboard fairly difficult. However, the Germans standing aft gave me a hand up, and I was received by the captain of the *Emden*. I told him from our captain that if he would give his parole the captain was prepared to take all his crew on board the *Sydney* and take them straight up to Colombo. He stuck a little over the word 'parole,' but readily agreed when I explained the exact scope of it. And now came the dreadful job of getting the badly wounded into the boats. There were 15 of these. . . . The Germans were all suffering badly from thirst, so we hauled the boats' water-casks up on deck, and they eagerly broached them, giving the wounded some first.

"I took an early opportunity of saluting the captain of the *Emden* and saying, 'You fought very well, sir.' He seemed taken aback, and said, 'No.' I went away, but presently he came up to me and said, 'Thank you very much for saying that, but I was not satisfied. We should have done better. You were very lucky in shooting away all my voice-pipes at the beginning.'

"When I got a chance, with all the boats away, I went to have a look round the ship. I have no intention of describing what I saw. With the exception of the fore-castle, which is hardly touched from fore-bridge to stern post, she is nothing but a shambles, and the whole thing was most shocking."

In Germany the destruction of the corsair had a particularly depressing effect, not only because of the loss of the vessel, but because the trade of their hated rival in Indian waters could no longer be harassed.

CHAPTER XXIX

Fighting Land-battles at Sea

I am of opinion the boldest measures are the safest.

NELSON

THE attempted forcing of the Dardanelles was the one definitely offensive campaign undertaken by Great Britain and France in Europe in 1914-15. It opened with a brilliant but unsuccessful attempt by the Navy and ended in a dual failure on the part of the Navy and the Army.

The beginning of the operations was not quite fair to the senior service, although it must be admitted that Admiral Carden, commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, was of opinion that the fortifications of the Dardanelles could be reduced by a regular and sustained naval bombardment. This belief was upheld by various British and French experts, including the war staff of the Admiralty, but excluding Lord Fisher.

The die was cast. Only 163 miles separated the entrance of the Dardanelles from the Golden Horn. Unfortunately they were not ordinary miles. They teemed with formidable difficulties. Land fortifications, mines, floating torpedoes, submarines, those will-o'-the-wisps the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, plus the obsolete Turkish Navy—each and all would be used against the Armada. The Navy knew of these things. The Turks, stiffened by German officers,

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German ideas, German organization, also had surprises in store. People at home, ignorant of the hazardous character of the adventure, fondly imagined that the naval key could speedily unlock the rather rusty water-gates of the Near East.

The escape of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* was not merely an incident. It was a disaster. A few hours before the outbreak of hostilities between Great Britain and Germany the Mediterranean Fleet came across these German ships in that great inland sea that washes the northern coast of Africa. It had them at its mercy, but war had not been declared. Diplomacy is cordially hated in the Navy, which prefers deeds to words and shells to syllables. Apparently the German captains had been warned, for no sooner did they sight the British than they steamed eastward at full speed. Early in the morning of August 4, 1914, the *Breslau*, a light cruiser of 4,478 tons, mounting a dozen 4.1-inch guns, was firing broadsides at the Algerian town of Bona, a fortified seaport and naval base, while the *Goeben* was bombarding Philippeville. The latter, one of the most powerful battle-cruisers afloat, and the fastest vessel in the German Navy, accompanied by her satellite, was next heard of as having been driven into the Sicilian port of Messina after an exciting chase. On the 6th, anxious to escape disarmament and internment by staying in a neutral harbour longer than twenty-four hours, they departed, their decks cleared for action, with the Anglo-French squadron supposed to be awaiting them in the Straits outside the three-mile limit, the British at the south, the French at the north. With their bands playing *Die Wacht am Rhein*, the ships steamed off in a southerly direction, the giant

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Dreadnought bristling with ten 11-inch and twelve 6-inch guns.

The Mediterranean mystery deepened with the passing of the hours. At last the Press Bureau announced, on the authority of the Admiralty, that "There are strong reasons for believing that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* have taken refuge in the Dardanelles, where they will be dealt with according to international law. With the dismantling and internment of these ships the safety of trade will have been almost entirely secured."

The unexpected had happened, but what was surmized as the sequel to the escape of the ships to Turkish waters on August 10th did not materialize. There was a make-believe sale of them to the Ottoman Government. With refreshing humour the *Goeben* became the *Sultan Yawuz Selim* (Sultan Selim the Grim) and the *Breslau* the *Midillu* (Mitylene). The presumed end of the career of the cruisers proved to be the beginning. No blame whatever is attached to the British Admiralty for the intelligence conveyed to the public. The Treaty of Berlin (1878) precluded Germany from sending her ships through the Dardanelles, and it was believed that the Sublime Porte would deal with the refugees according to international law. In charge of the Turkish Navy was a British officer, Rear-Admiral Arthur H. Limpus. On August 15th he was relieved of his command. The pressure in the Mediterranean, momentarily relieved by the exit of the German men-of-war, was increased shortly afterward by deliberate acts of hostility, including the bombardment of Sebastopol on November 1st. The British Ambassador left Constantinople on the evening of that day. Ever since the arrival of the

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Goeben and the *Breslau* the Turkish Government had made repeated assurances of their strictest neutrality. They were lying to gain time. In this they did not break with tradition. Had Turkey refrained from entering the conflict there would have been no Dardanelles gamble.

Rear-Admiral E. C. T. Troubridge, commander of the First Cruiser Squadron in the Mediterranean, returned to England "in order that an inquiry may be held into the circumstances leading to the escape of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* from Messina Straits." The court fully and honourably acquitted the bearer of a name first made known to fame by Admiral Sir Thomas Troubridge, that splendid fighter in the battles of the Nile and of St Vincent. Subsequently a party of bluejackets with Rear-Admiral E. C. T. Troubridge in command played a splendid part in the defence of Serbia. The Board of Admiralty approved "in all respects" the measures taken by Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne, commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, but he shortly afterward returned home and was succeeded by Vice-Admiral Sackville H. Carden, an energetic Irishman who had served in the Egyptian War of 1882, fought at Suakin in 1884, and taken part in the Benin expedition of 1897.

One stirring episode relieves this drab story of ill fortune. There happened to be in the Mediterranean a trim little British light cruiser named the *Gloucester*. She is a sister ship of the *Bristol* and the *Glasgow*. On the night of August 6th she came up with the *Breslau* and the *Goeben* in or near the Straits of Messina, the former trying by various artful manœuvres to entice the *Gloucester* away so that her larger consort might escape. Captain W. A. H. Kelly,

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aided by the moonlight, kept both ships under strict observation and refused to be shaken off. He followed them all night and the following day. According to one account the British opened fire at about 2 p.m. The fore 6-inch gun of the *Gloucester* barked out, and fell short. The shot was returned with interest by the *Breslau*, which fired a broadside that whizzed overhead and flung up mountains of water. Before placing the next shell in position one of the gun-layers on the *Gloucester* spat on it for luck, a fond superstition in the Navy which worked well in this particular case, for it damaged one of the *Breslau's* funnels a few seconds later. With amazing dexterity the captain dodged all the enemy's shots, though two of the boats were shattered. Had the battle-cruiser turned upon the *Gloucester* it would have meant annihilation for the light cruiser, but she did not, probably because Captain Kelly gave her the impression that support was near at hand. He was certainly endeavouring to lead the enemy in the direction of the main squadron. The commander of the *Goeben*, however, was too wary to be enticed into a skilfully laid trap. As for the *Gloucester*, she hung on until she was either recalled or outdistanced. For this valiant service Captain Kelly was gazetted C.B. "The combination of audacity with restraint," runs the official record, "unswerving attention to the principal military object—namely, the holding on to the *Goeben* without tempting her too much—and strict conformity to orders constitutes a naval episode which may justly be regarded as a model." The audacity of the British commander can be appreciated by comparing the broadside fire of the three vessels. That of the *Gloucester* was 355 lb., of the two Germans 8,500 lb. !

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At daybreak on November 3rd the bombardment of the Dardanelles began. A combined British and French squadron shelled some of the forts at the entrance at a range of between six and seven miles. The forts replied with their 9·2 Krupp guns and a few of larger calibre. No ships were hit, a solitary projectile alone falling in dangerous proximity to the floating targets, and there were no casualties. A gunnery-lieutenant in the fore-top of one of the British ships had just begun to enjoy a cigarette, and was remarking to a comrade, "Well, that's all over," when a shell came flying across their line of sight, striking the water only about twenty yards off. The fort at Cape Helles, at the toe of the peninsula, was apparently damaged, for dense volumes of black smoke, lighted up by a column of flame, were observed to issue from it, followed by a dull roar which probably indicated the blowing up of the magazine. This preliminary skirmish was a kind of test case. The judge reserved his verdict.

On February 19, 1915, exactly one hundred and eight years after Duckworth's passage of the Dardanelles, a much more serious attempt was made to reduce the outer forts at Cape Helles and Seddel Bahr, on the European side of the Straits, and of Kum Kale on the Asiatic side. Seddel Bahr and Kum Kale are almost opposite, and command the entrance, which is two and a quarter miles wide. The fleet included a battle-cruiser, the *Inflexible*, recently returned from the battle off the Falkland Islands, the British pre-Dreadnought battleships *Vengeance*, *Cornwallis*, *Triumph*, and *Agamemnon*, commissioned between 1898 and 1904, the almost obsolete French battleships *Gaulois*, *Suffren*, and *Bouvet*, commanded

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by Rear-Admiral Guépratte, accompanied by destroyers. There was also present the new seaplane-carrier and repair-ship, the *Ark Royal*, a name borne by Howard of Effingham's flagship in the stormy days of 1588. The fleet was capable of bearing no fewer than thirty-six big guns of from 12-inch to 10-inch calibre on the forts. After shelling at long range with apparently good effect for over six hours, the firing in some cases being directed by an observation-ship because it was not possible for all the vessels to see their targets, a change was made in the disposition of the fleet. The older vessels were ordered to move nearer inshore. This enabled their secondary armament, totalling sixty-six guns, varying from 7·5-inch to 5·5-inch, to be brought into service. The burden of the fight, hitherto entirely one-sided, because the Turks had either not been able to reply or had been saving their ammunition for use at closer quarters, was now to be sustained by these half-dozen ships, supported by the long-range fire of the *Inflexible* and the *Agamemnon*. As the squadron drew closer the guns of the forts suddenly blazed out, which was sufficient proof that whatever destruction had been wrought by the previous bombardment was not vital.

When the bugles sounded "Cease fire!" the strongholds on the European side had lapsed into silence, while Kum Kale still spluttered at intervals. The success of the operation was afterward discovered to be very slight. A Turkish official *communiqué* naïvely admitted that "one soldier was slightly wounded by stone splinters," and added the intelligence that "three hostile armoured ships were damaged, one flagship heavily." As a matter of fact none of the Anglo-French vessels was hit.

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Operations had to be suspended for a time owing to furious gales. They were resumed on the 25th, when hydroplanes assisted in the task of range-finding and noted the effect of the firing. The oil-driven super-Dreadnought, the *Queen Elizabeth*, then the mightiest battleship afloat, made her first essay in warfare. The *Irresistible*, a sister ship of the ill-fated *Bulwark*, which had been blown up at Sheerness in the last week of the previous November, and of the *Formidable*, torpedoed in the English Channel, also took part. These vessels, with the *Agamemnon* and the *Gaulois*, started pommelling the outer forts, now repaired to some extent, at long range. The eight 15-inch guns of the *Queen Elizabeth* fired broadside after broadside at the fort on Cape Helles, each shell weighing approximately a ton. Some of the breezy boys call them 'Lizzie's Headache Pills.' This terrific onslaught, carried on well out of range of the forts, was ineffectively replied to by two 9.2-inch guns, the heaviest which the land-battery boasted. The *Agamemnon* attacked Seddel Bahr, and was hit at 11,000 yards, three men being killed and five seriously wounded. On the Asiatic side the *Gaulois* confined her attentions to Kum Kale, and the *Irresistible* to Orkhanieh, about a mile south of the latter.

Half an hour before noon the *Vengeance* and the *Cornwallis*, covered by long-range fire, ran in and engaged Cape Helles, whose big guns had now been put out of action, and completely silenced it. The *Suffren* and the *Charlemagne* also made a determined attempt on the two forts on the opposite side of the Straits, boldly advancing to within 2,000 yards of them, and pouring in a rain of shells that brought

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a feeble and half-hearted reply. The *Vengeance*, *Triumph*, and *Albion* were then ordered to complete their reduction. This was successfully accomplished toward the close of the day.

Taking advantage of the remaining light the mine-sweepers got to work, and under cover of the Fleet began clearing the entrance of the Straits. On the following day four miles had been rendered navigable, enabling three battleships to enter and attack Fort Dardanus, overlooking Kephez Bay, on the coast of Asia Minor. The four 5.9-inch guns made poor practice, but a surprise came in the form of some new batteries which had been erected. Landing parties then set off from the *Vengeance* and the *Irresistible*, completely demolished the forts of Cape Helles, Seddel Bahr, and Orkhanieh, and partially destroyed that of Kum Kale. The garrison of the last-mentioned stronghold was driven post-haste across the bridge spanning the river Mendere, which was afterward rendered useless. Two new 4-inch guns, discovered skilfully concealed in the neighbouring village, and four Nordenfeldts guarding the entrance were made incapable of further service. Unfortunately a body of Turkish troops hiding in the cemetery and elsewhere began sniping the Marines, and they were recalled, with the loss of one killed and three wounded.

Operations were again delayed by wind, rain, and fog, rendering long-range fire and aerial observation practically useless. They were resumed on the 1st of March, when three battleships entered the Straits and attacked the fort and batteries at Kephez Point, on the Asiatic side. Another surprise awaited the sea-dogs, for howitzers and field-guns assisted in the defence. Moreover, seaplanes found out that several new gun

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positions had been prepared. Two shells landed on the quarterdeck of the *Triumph*, one fell near the gun-room, and another reduced the furniture in the captain's cabin to firewood. The French, stationing their ships in the Gulf of Saros, operated off Bulair, bombarding the batteries and the lines of communication. At night the scavengers recommenced their highly dangerous work under fire. On the 2nd the *Canopus*, the *Swiftsure*, and the *Cornwallis* attacked two other forts, one of which was so damaged that eventually it ceased to offer further resistance. This time all the ships were hit. The mine-sweepers continued their operations when their big brothers of the Navy had finished, going about their business with as little apparent anxiety as they manifest when trawling in the North Sea, and gradually creeping nearer and nearer to the Narrows, where formidable problems awaited solution.

Additions made to the Allied armada showed that the naval authorities of both countries appreciated the strength of the positions that guarded the sea-route to Constantinople, but the fact that on the 4th it was again found necessary to send landing parties, covered by detachments of the Marine Brigade of the Royal Naval Division, to continue the clearance of the ground at the entrance to the Straits indicated that military operations would become absolutely indispensable in the near future. Indeed, the French Ministry of War had already decided to concentrate an expeditionary force in Northern Africa "ready to embark the moment the signal is given." The pity of it was that the campaign had been started without assistance on land. Every day that passed made it evident that the Turks and their friends were gaining

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strength. In the neighbourhood of Seddel Bahr more concealed guns were destroyed, but at Kum Kale the landing was repulsed, with nineteen killed, three missing, and twenty-five wounded. "The net result of these operations against the outer works," writes Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett, with the authority of one who has studied the situation on the spot, "was to prove this: that although these reinforced earthworks might be smothered by shell-fire and the gunners driven to their bomb-proofs, under highly favourable conditions, yet the actual material damage inflicted by ships' shell was relatively unimportant, unless a direct hit was scored on the gun. Thus up to this point there was nothing to encourage great hope for the future."

On the 5th an attack on three of the European defences of the Narrows, forts Rumilieh Medjidieh Tabia, Hamidieh II Tabia, and Namazieh, was begun by indirect fire from the *Queen Elizabeth*, supported by the *Inflexible* and the *Prince George*. All the forts sustained damage, and the magazine at Fort Hamidieh II Tabia blew up, depriving its two 14-inch guns of ammunition. A military station was destroyed by the *Sapphire*, which also fired on troops in the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Adramyti. The day was especially noteworthy as marking the first attempt to reduce the defences of Smyrna, the chief town on the coast of Asia Minor, by Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Peirse.

Two more strongholds were attacked by the mammoth battle-cruiser, supported by the *Agamemnon* and the *Ocean*, on the following day. They flung their shells for twelve miles across the peninsula, stationing themselves in the Gulf of Saros and bom-

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barding with remorseless fury forts Hamidieh I Tabia and Hamidieh III, in the vicinity of Chanak, on the Asiatic shore. While this method of attack, directed by airmen, precluded the possibility of a return fire from the forts, howitzers and field-guns were not long in getting to work on the European side. Three shells struck the *Queen Elizabeth*, fortunately without causing damage of any importance. Five ships inside the Straits met with a particularly warm reception from the Suandere and Mount Dardanos batteries, and Fort Rumilieh Medjidieh Tabia again opened fire. Nearly all the vessels were hit. The Mount Dardanos batteries were bombarded by four French battleships on the 7th and silenced, while the *Agamemnon* and the *Lord Nelson* pounded forts Rumilieh Medjidieh Tabia and Hamidieh I Tabia, the strongholds already attacked by the *Queen Elizabeth* and her consorts, until they ceased to reply. It was warm work, for when the *Suffren* penetrated to the extreme limit of the minefield a splinter from a bursting shell fell at the French admiral's feet. During these assaults and operations the seaplanes were invariably in evidence, and rendered conspicuous service. On the 7th the Russian Fleet bombarded several places not far from the Bosphorus, endeavouring to unlock the other gate that led to the desired haven.

When daylight reappeared the *Queen Elizabeth* and four battleships entered the Dardanelles, this being the first time that the super-Dreadnought had come within range of the land-batteries, and took up the task of reducing Fort Rumilieh Medjidieh Tabia, but they were hampered by unfavourable weather. Mist, wind, and high seas played into the hands of the Turks all too often in the first phase of the Dardanelles

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campaign, enabling them to patch up damaged fortifications and bring up new guns, supplies of ammunition, and reinforcements.

On the night of the 13th the light cruiser *Amethyst*, while attending the mine-sweepers in Sari Siglar Bay, was subjected to a terrific cannonade at close range. One of the trawlers was sunk. Things had gone so well in the early part of that night. There had been no inquisitive searchlights from the shore, no booming of guns, nothing to betray the presence of the enemy. Fortunately the Navy does not nurse its grievances; it weans them. The worst was yet to come.

CHAPTER XXX

The Shambles of Gallipoli

Recollect that a brave man dies but once, a coward all his life long.

NELSON

FOUR months had come and gone since the beginning of the great adventure, and all the 'heavy fathers' of the Fleet remained in their normal health. Some of them were bruised, but bruises do not count on active service. On March 18, 1915, there was a triple tragedy. Three battleships fought their last fight, and were 'buried at sea,' after the manner of sailors from time immemorial. They received their death-blow during a general attack upon the fortresses at the Narrows, and in each case it was struck from below. The *Irresistible*, the *Ocean*, and the *Bouvet* died of mine-fever. That day the scavengers fished up three mines, and these veterans of the Fleet fished up three others—to their cost.

The disaster came about in this way. The sweepers had been at work for ten days to clear a passage, and we may be perfectly sure that Vice-Admiral J. M. de Robeck was satisfied with the result of their operations, otherwise the *Queen Elizabeth*, the *Inflexible*, the *Agamemnon*, and the *Lord Nelson* would never have been allowed to proceed toward the Narrows, where the land pinches in the water to such an extent that in the vicinity of Chanak the

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channel is only about fourteen hundred yards wide. They concentrated their guns on the now familiar forts known as Rumilieh Medjidieh Tabia, Hamidieh II Tabia, and Namazieh, on the European side, and Hamidieh I Tabia and Hamidieh III on the opposite shore. Simultaneously the *Triumph* and the *Prince George* attacked the batteries at Soghandere, Dardanos, and Kephez Point. The ships sustained the heavy fire of howitzers and field-guns from 10.45 a.m. until 12.22 p.m., when the *Suffren*, the *Gaulois*, the *Charlemagne*, and the *Bouvet*, of the French squadron, engaged the forts at closer range. The ten ships pounded away like Thor with his hammer, and four at least of the forts gave them good measure in reply, with the result that not one of the vessels remained unhit when the land-batteries ceased action a few minutes before 1.30.

Now was evidently the moment to exact complete victory. The *Vengeance*, the *Irresistible*, the *Albion*, the *Ocean*, the *Swiftsure*, and the *Majestic* slowly advanced as the French ships withdrew. A few minutes sufficed to prove that the Turks and the Germans were playing their old game. The forts blazed out with renewed energy. Tragedy followed hastily on the heels of triumph. Five shells struck the *Bouvet*, whose bulgy sides, narrowing toward the deck, made her appear like a flat-bottomed boat floating upside down, with her funnels where her keel ought to be. Then she "seemed to stop in a great field of foam and hesitate," writes an eyewitness. "On board the *Gaulois* some one had only just time to say, 'What's the matter with the *Bouvet*?' when an explosion shook the atmosphere and clouded the sky, and so the *Bouvet* sank. We distinctly saw

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its two masts, which seemed to close in on one another as the hull opened. It was all over in a minute and a half." It is believed that the French battleship, which was of 12,205 tons displacement, and nearly twenty years old, managed to elude two floating mines, but was struck by the third floating canister of death. Officers and men went to their watery graves standing to attention and saluting the flag. Only 64 of the *Bouvet's* crew of 630 were saved.

Undeterred by this disaster, the attack continued, and the sturdy little mine-sweepers went on with their work. At about four o'clock the *Irresistible* was struck by a shell, and a minute later a mine exploded beneath her. She left the fighting-line with a heavy list to port. The crew, obeying the order "Everybody aft," betrayed no sign of fear, though shells were bursting about them and the firing grew fiercer from the forts as the ship drifted toward the Asiatic shore. With marvellous dexterity a destroyer was brought to the side of the doomed ship. "Boys and ordinary seamen, in the boat!" shouted the captain from the bridge, followed by "All hands next!" when the first order had been obeyed. With the exception of the officers on the bridge and a few men, all had found a place on the destroyer, when a shell burst, killing and wounding several on the quarterdeck. A noble little band of heroes who had volunteered to stay behind to cast off the hawsers which held fast the destroyer, flung them overboard. With over 600 men the craft left the sinking vessel, disembarked them on the *Queen Elizabeth*, and returned for those who still remained on the *Irresistible*.

Exactly two hours after the *Irresistible* had been rendered *hors de combat* the *Ocean*, which had been

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standing by with the idea of taking her in tow, also struck a mine. A great rent was torn in the starboard side, the steering-gear was shattered, the main steam-pipe of the starboard engine was burst, and some of the guns were dismounted. In two minutes no fewer than five destroyers were alongside, despite a terrible cross-fire from Chanak and Kilid Bahr. One of the craft was hit by a shell below the water-line, but the inrush of water was almost completely stopped by the ready resourcefulness of a stoker. He promptly sat in the hole and remained in this uncomfortable position until a collision-mat could be got out. Nothing could be done to save the *Ocean*, and she sank in thirty-four fathoms of water. Nearly all her crew were saved.

Three wrecks and the *Gaulois* put out of action by reason of the severe injuries she had sustained were surely sufficient disasters for one day. Yet almost at the same time as the *Ocean* had sustained her mortal wound the *Inflexible* had encountered a mine, which flooded her fore submerged flat. This was indeed adding insult to injury, for already she had been compelled to deal with a fire which broke out on her fore-bridge at the same time as the fore-top was hit by a shell. Every one in the latter was either killed or wounded.

At first the Admiral determined to renew the attack at the first opportunity, but on further consideration it was decided that land-operations also were necessary. On his own confession, Mr Winston Churchill regretted this, and endeavoured to persuade Lord Fisher to telegraph to Admiral de Robeck that the naval attack was to be resumed. This the First Sea Lord refused to do. All three of the lost battleships

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were old, having been built between 1893 and 1898 at a cost of about £3,100,000. They were replaced by the *Queen*, the *Implacable*, and the *Henri IV*.

The great general attack upon the fortresses at the Narrows had failed, and among those who witnessed it was General Sir Ian S. M. Hamilton, commander-in-chief of the Dardanelles Expeditionary Force. It was not an auspicious welcome, particularly as he found that the transports had been wrongly loaded. He had no alternative but to send them to Alexandria to be adjusted, thereby delaying all thought of landing for several weeks and giving the Turks an excellent opportunity to complete their arrangements for the defence of the peninsula. The Navy, however, continued to sweep for mines and to bombard the forts when the weather was propitious, so as to render the task of repairing the latter as difficult as possible.

The Battle of the Landing on Sunday, April 25, 1915, belongs rather to the Army than to the senior service, although, of course, the Navy had to carry the brave sons of the Empire on its broad back until they could jump from the boats and wade ashore. The troops were to disembark in two main landings, the first at a point north of Gaba Tepe, and the second at beaches V, W, and X, near Cape Helles, while feints were made at S and Y, on either side of the toe of the peninsula, to protect the flanks and hold the enemy in check. Five battleships, one cruiser, eight destroyers, fifteen trawlers, the *Ark Royal*, and the balloon-ship *Manica* were concerned in the landing near Gaba Tepe, which was covered by gunfire from the *Triumph*, the *Majestic*, and the *Bacchante*. Howitzers and field-guns, as well as fire from warships at Chanak, were at once brought to bear on the

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transports, while the narrow beach was swept by shrapnel. It was under these terrible conditions that the Australians effected a landing, which was not completed until the 26th.

The squadron for the landings at the five points to the south was made up of seven battleships, four cruisers, six mine-sweepers, and fourteen trawlers.

The *Amethyst* and the *Sapphire*, with the transports the *Southland* and the *Braemar Castle*, landed their troops and the Plymouth Battalion of the Royal Marines at Y beach, west of Krithia, at about 4 a.m., covered by the *Goliath*. The Scottish Borderers and the Marines boldly scaled the steep cliffs, but after severe fighting were compelled to re-embark on the following day. The landing at X, near Cape Tekeh, was carried out from the *Implacable* and was entirely successful, but at W, between Cape Helles and Cape Tekeh, where the same ship and the *Euryalus* disembarked some of the Lancashire Fusiliers, the fire from the vessels was unable to clear the enemy's wire entanglements and trenches, and the Turks brought all manner of guns to bear on the attacking party. The troops, however, pushed on despite heavy losses, and the Maxims which enfiladed the main beach were rushed with the bayonet. A particularly fierce resistance was offered at V, a strip of about 300 yards dominated by Seddel Bahr, and it was not until the afternoon of the 26th that it was captured. Here 2,000 men were landed by the *River Clyde*, a collier nicknamed 'the New Horse of Troy,' because Commander Edward Unwin had conceived the happy idea of having huge ports cut in her sides, through which the men could pour out on to gangways supported by lighters and land directly on the beach.

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During the night a hill dominating the position was captured by other forces, and the beach was won. At Camber, a little to the south of S, where the men secured a firm footing, some of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers attempted to reach the village of Seddel Bahr, and had to be withdrawn. The French landing at Kum Kale, which was also undertaken to distract the enemy while the main attack was delivered, was successful, but as it was found that no progress could be made the soldiers were withdrawn.

For many months the military and naval forces of the Allies fought with Turks, Germans, and Nature in the peninsula, gaining a few yards here, losing a few yards there. When the troops were told that it was to be evacuated they just gripped their rifles a little tighter, jerked the packs on their backs to give them more freedom of movement, squared their jaws, looked more grim than ever, and set off to take part in another campaign. God's bottle holds the tears of many valiant warriors. Not a few were shed in the shambles of Gallipoli.

CHAPTER XXXI

The Battle of the Dogger Bank

Three points of superiority of the British Fleet must be recognized : superiority in tactics, superiority in gunfire, and superiority in personnel.

M. HANOTAUX

VARIOUS attempts have been made to explain how it came about that a section of the German High Sea Fleet was cruising in the North Sea at 7 a.m. on January 24, 1915. Admiral Scheer tells us that it was merely making a reconnaissance, with orders to destroy any of the British light forces it might happen to meet. It has been suggested that von Hipper contemplated a raid on the Tyne or the Firth of Forth, but if one is to judge by the time-table of previous raids this does not seem highly probable. The bombardment of Yarmouth in the previous November, and of Scarborough, the Hartlepoons, and Whitby in the following month, had taken place in the early morning. The same big ships used in the latter attack, with the exception of the *Blücher*, were employed on this occasion.

Germany was officially informed that the project was "an advance in the North Sea," which is obviously capable of several meanings. Perhaps the defeat of von Spee and the German Pacific Squadron in the battle of the Falkland Islands by Admiral Sturdee led the Higher Command to hope that a section of the Grand Fleet might be found patrolling at a grave

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disadvantage as regards guns and numbers. A further suggestion is that von Hipper deliberately sought Beatty's patrolling squadron with the idea of leading him on to a position where 'heavy fathers' of the Fleet were waiting, playing much the same game as the British had tried to play in the Heligoland Bight affair. This theory seems feasible in the light of Mr Churchill's explanation to the House of Commons. "The action was not forced," he said, "because the enemy, after abandoning their wounded consort, the *Blücher*, made good their escape into waters infested by their submarines and mines." In the Admiralty's initial announcement of January 24th it was stated that the enemy "reached an area where dangers from German submarines and mines prevented further pursuit." Beatty's preliminary telegraphic report said that "the presence of the enemy's submarines subsequently necessitated the action being broken off," but in his dispatch of February 2nd no mention is made of either. According to Mr Filson Young, who for a time was a secretary on Beatty's staff, the Admiral's last signal to his second-in-command was "Keep nearer to the enemy," and he quotes Lord Fisher as saying that there were no submarines in the vicinity and not a mine within fifty miles. "Northern mists" and the "fog of war" are not illuminating when historical accuracy is sought. There is something very suggestive of both about the battle of the Dogger Bank, for if we do not know the reason that caused the Germans to come out, neither have we been allowed to read the dispatch of the officer who took charge of the squadron after Beatty, by an unfortunate circumstance, was precluded from taking further part in the fighting.

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The battle-cruisers at the Admiral's disposal consisted of the *Lion*, flying his flag, the *Princess Royal*, the *Tiger*—sister ships each mounting eight 13·5-inch guns—and the *New Zealand* and the *Indomitable*, with a similar number of 12-inch guns. In addition all had sixteen 4-inch guns apiece. The *New Zealand* flew the flag of Rear-Admiral Sir Archibald Moore. Under Commodore Goodenough were four light cruisers, the *Southampton*, the *Nottingham*, the *Birmingham*, and the *Lowestoft*, each having eight 6-inch guns. Commodore Tyrwhitt had the *Arethusa*, the *Aurora*, and the *Undaunted*, with their two 6-inch, and six 4-inch guns, in addition to destroyer flotillas.

Tyrwhitt's vessels were scouting ahead when the *Aurora* spotted an enemy ship shortly after 7 a.m. The latter was travelling at about 20 knots, and her smoke was hiding her to a certain extent, but there was reason to believe that she was the *Kolberg*, a light cruiser with twelve 4·1-inch guns. She was the first to open fire. However, it did not take long for the *Aurora* to find the range, and the latter promptly fell back on her supporting battle-cruisers. Sir David Beatty, on receiving information by wireless that the enemy was engaged, immediately altered course in the direction from whence the flash of the guns had been seen, namely south-south-east, and increased his speed to 22 knots. At the same time he ordered Goodenough and the destroyers to chase and get in touch with the Germans, then nothing more than "a smudge on the horizon," to quote the words of an eyewitness. It was scarcely necessary to issue these instructions; for, as Sir David notes in his dispatch, "my wishes had already been forestalled by the respective senior officers," and reports came almost

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simultaneously from several ships detailing the strength and position of the opposing force. It consisted of three battle-cruisers, the *Seydlitz*, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral von Hipper, the *Derfflinger*, the *Moltke*, and the armoured cruiser *Blücher*, half a dozen light cruisers, and attendant destroyers. The *Seydlitz* and the *Moltke* each had ten 11-inch guns, the *Derfflinger* eight 12-inch guns, and the *Blücher* twelve 8·2-inch guns.

Almost at once the German squadron altered course from north-west to south-east and made in the direction of home. Beatty followed, closely watching the enemy on the port bow, and the light cruisers hung on the heels of the retreating foe and reported their every movement to the *Lion*. At 7.30 the enemy was going "hell for leather," while the black gangs of the British battle-cruisers were working as they had never worked before. Their efforts had the desired result, for they were forging through the water at a speed of over 28 knots an hour, at which pace the *New Zealand* and the *Indomitable* greatly exceeded their normal rate, to the intense pleasure of the Admiral, who makes special mention of the record in his official communication. The latter was the slowest of the battle-cruisers, but made such excellent steaming that later on the Admiral signalled, "Well done, *Indomitable* stokers!" "One hundred stokers," says Captain Pelly, "worked below like niggers to get more speed out of the *Tiger*. We were doing 29 knots at least, although the ship was only built to do 28. We only stoke oil, and we used a good mouthful."¹ The squadrons were then travelling on parallel courses

¹ Statement to the London correspondent of the *Telegraaf* (Amsterdam).

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distant about fourteen miles, and settling down to a long, stern chase.

By 8.52 a.m. the battle-cruisers had closed to within 20,000 yards of the rear enemy ship, the *Blücher*. Von Hipper was proceeding in line ahead—a mere landsman's single file—the light cruisers leading, and destroyers on their starboard beam to screen them. Beatty, who was directing operations from the bridge and refused to take cover, now manœuvred to bring his heavy vessels on a line of bearing so as to dodge the smoke of the funnels as much as possible, and a single shell was fired from the *Lion's* foremost turret to test the range. It fell short and splashed in the water. The process was repeated several times, and at 9.9 a.m. the *Lion* scored her first shot on the *Blücher*. Eleven minutes later the *Tiger* opened fire on the same vessel, Beatty's flagship shifting to the *Derfflinger*, the third ship in the line. Several salvos from the four bow guns hit her at a range which had now closed to 18,000 yards. At 9.14 a.m. the enemy took up the gauntlet and brought her guns to bear on the British. Twenty minutes later the *Princess Royal* concentrated on the *Blücher*, now showing signs of reduced speed by dropping astern. When the *New Zealand* came into range she took the armoured cruiser in hand, and the *Princess Royal* shifted to the rear battle-cruiser, severely punishing her in the process.

It was then evident that the German destroyers threatened an attack, whereupon the *Meteor* and the 'M' Division of destroyers, led by Captain the Hon. H. Meade, drew ahead to drive off the enemy, with the result that the hussar-stroke was not delivered.

Within thirty-five minutes of the *Lion's* first hit on

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the *Blücher*, that is to say, at 9.45 a.m., the latter was a doomed ship. The leading ship, the *Seydlitz*, which the *Lion* was now engaging, and which had also received attention from the *Tiger*, was on fire. The *Princess Royal* had concentrated on No. 3, the *Derfflinger*, and the *New Zealand* on the stricken *Blücher*, assisted by the *Tiger* when smoke precluded the latter from bringing her guns to bear with precision on No. 1. The *Moltke*, the second ship of the German line, seems to have escaped with little damage, largely by reason of the dense smoke which she created.

The warm reception given to the enemy was evidently not at all to their liking, for they now disposed their destroyers between the British and themselves so as to create a heavy smoke-screen. This also afforded them an opportunity to alter course and increase the distance between them and their contestants. Once again the issue of the fight largely depended on the men at the furnaces, for Beatty ordered the battle-cruisers to "proceed at their utmost speed."

A second destroyer attack was threatened, but the heavy fire of the *Lion* and the *Tiger*—the 'Cats,' as they were called by the Admiral—made their retirement imperative, and they fell back in their previous positions without carrying the plan into operation.

An officer of the *Meteor*, which at 10.40 a.m. was ordered to close the line and cover the *Lion*, thus placing the destroyer between the two opposing lines, records his unenviable experiences: ¹ "We were absolutely in the line of fire, shells whistling over and all around us, and now and again an enemy's broadside

¹ *Liverpool Daily Post*, February 7, 1915.

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aimed directly at us. Try and imagine a frail destroyer, steaming 30 knots, with four battle-cruisers on either side belching forth flame and smoke continually, the screech of the projectiles flying overhead seeming to tear the very air into ribbons, 12-inch shells dropping perilously near and raising columns of water 100 feet into the air a few yards away, the spray washing our decks and drenching all hands. Picture the awful crashing noise, the explosions and flashes as shots took effect, the massive tongues of fire shooting up, and the dense clouds of yellow and black smoke which obliterated a whole ship from view as the shells burst on striking."

The *Blücher*, which was gradually increasing her distance from No. 3 of the enemy line, hauled out to port at 10.43 a.m. She was badly on fire and had a heavy list. The *Indomitable* was ordered to put an end to her struggles.

A few minutes later submarines were sighted, and the Admiral personally saw the wash of a periscope. As in the affair of Heligoland Bight, the attack was thwarted by the use of the helm.

Shortly after this a lucky chance shot struck the *Lion* in the bow, damaging a feed-tank and putting the port engine out of commission. The injury was "beyond local repair," and the flagship was therefore unable to take further part in the fighting. In his preliminary telegraphic report Sir David says that this misfortune "undoubtedly deprived" us of a "greater victory." The *Indomitable* was still busy with the *Blücher*, but the Admiral ordered the other three battle-cruisers to attack the enemy, the command devolving on Rear-Admiral Sir Archibald Moore. Signalling a destroyer alongside, Beatty transferred



THE "LION" COMING INTO ACTION AT JUTLAND



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his flag to her with as little loss of time as was possible, and endeavoured to rejoin the squadron. He met his ships at noon retiring. All the German ships, with the exception of the *Blücher*, had succeeded in escaping.

When the *Lion* left the line, her speed greatly reduced, and showing an ugly list to port, a light cruiser and several destroyers at once closed to protect her from possible attack by submarine.

"Picture to yourself this monster fighting-ship," writes an officer of the *Aurora*,¹ "stripped bare for action and apparently as formidable as during the past few hours, when the murderous fire of her 13·5-inch turrets had made her seem so omnipotent; and yet, in contrast, apparently unable to steam, and perhaps about to sink. So she appeared to us as we hastened to her aid. Many of us thought her to be a doomed ship and that her crew were on deck preparatory to abandoning her.

"It was not long, however, before we found that she was quite seaworthy, though unable to steam more than slow speed, and that her crew had mustered on deck in order to watch and cheer their Admiral over the side as he boarded the destroyer *Attack* in order to be taken back to the battle. The *Blücher*, the sight of which might have reassured us, was out of our vision, and we—well, we were out of it; and the Admiral's dauntless signal, 'Engage the enemy more closely,' that was still flying from the *Lion's* masthead, merely seemed to increase our jealousy."

The *Lion*, after having fought so splendidly, developed further trouble during the course of the day. Her remaining starboard engine began to fail

¹ *London Magazine*, April 1916, p. 208.

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owing to priming, and eventually stopped. The *Indomitable* therefore took her in tow, and performed her difficult task with great credit to herself. One of the proudest possessions of the battle-cruiser is a silver statue of a guardian angel with a lion on each side, which was presented to their colleagues of the *Indomitable* by their colleagues of the flagship. It bears the following inscription, which tells its own story in the breezy way associated with the personnel of the senior service: "Presented to the captain and officers of H.M.S. *Indomitable*, to commemorate an excellent 6½-inch hawser."

Thus far I have mainly followed Sir David Beatty's own story of the action. Let us now glance at the work of individual ships. The following has been communicated to the writer by one who fought in the *Tiger* and was mentioned in dispatches:

"Before coming to the actual engagement I would like to draw your attention to an incident which will convey how really and truly ready any unit of the British Navy is for the supreme effort that at any time it may be called upon to make.

"We had been waiting and waiting months for the German ships to make their appearance, and many were the grumbles of the old Tars on board, from the captain downwards, at our continued unsuccessful effort to cross their bows. It was no new thing to hear the pipe on board 'The Germans won't come out,' and as this was received on various mess-decks the grumbles became a lively howl and comments too numerous to mention filled the air. January 23rd dawned with the usual breakfast-time greetings, and the subject of discussion, instead of being the likelihood of a scrap, was as to which football team of the

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ship would be the victor in the afternoon. We had several football teams and other parties for recreation landed, and as late as 5.30 p.m., when we were returning, the desired action seemed as far away as ever. It was not until some hours later that the call came to proceed to sea as the enemy ships were thought to be somewhere outside their cotton-wool corner at Kiel.

“At 6.30 a.m. on Sunday, the 24th, ‘Action Station’ was sounded. I was having my morning tub at the time, so grabbing my clothes, and half dressed, I hurried to my duty station, the port 6-inch gun control tower, a very limited space, in which four others, a midshipman included, had very little room to spare. The first indication we had of ‘anything doing’ came twenty minutes afterwards, when we heard, ‘Firing off the port bow, sir,’ which proved to be our destroyers firing at submarines, at the same time encircling us with black smoke to hide us from them.

“It was about 7.10 a.m. when the *Lion*, leading the line, tried the range, and after a couple of shots got it and kept up a very rapid fire. We then got the range and our guns began banging away too. I heard Midshipman — say ‘The beggars have begun,’ and looking through the observation slit I saw a salvo drop about fifty yards away from us, sending up huge sheets of water. We had been a considerable time in action when their destroyers attacked us. Our captain replied effectively with his 6-inch guns. I saw one destroyer get two shells amidships and her mast come tumbling down. It seemed to me as if nothing could prevent her from sinking. The remainder of their destroyers shot away, throwing up big columns of smoke as they went. A little while after I saw the

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Blücher about two miles astern of her own line, apparently left to her fate. I know we peppered her all right.

"It was at this time, when waiting for our next order, that there was a terrific report, followed by a big flash, and I was just conscious of being flung right up in the corner before losing my senses altogether. How long I remained unconscious I do not know, but when I recovered I found I was very much on fire; my neck scarf was burnt almost to a cinder, but I managed to rid myself of my smouldering clothes. Looking round, I expected to find a hole in the roof, but the shell had burst right beneath us, and the concussion caused the havoc in our little station. The whole place seemed on fire, and the smell from the shell was sickly and suffocating.

"I then noticed the middy lying across the trap door, and by the look of him I thought he must be dead. I crawled over to him, lifted him up, and found that a fragment of shell had struck him in the stomach. I was in a sorry plight. I could not leave him there, for if I did the fumes would surely kill him. I then reported '6-inch port gun control-tower out of action,' and was permitted to get out, if possible. On turning round after reporting, one of my mates crawled out from behind the range clock. He gave me a bit of a shock, as I thought he was killed. I told him to give me a hand with the middy. We got either side of him, and lifting him up found that his feet were entangled in the remains of the iron ladder.

"After freeing him I lowered him through the trap-door. Lying full length on my stomach, I lowered him as far as I could, and then had no other

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option but to let him drop into the war distributing station, some fourteen or sixteen feet below. The iron ladder, the only means of escape, was broken to bits, and the war distributing station was in flames. I had to drop down after him, risking the chance of dropping on top of him. In the meantime my mate was attending to the other chap, who was alive but in a very bad state.

“It seemed to me on dropping beside the middy that we were out of the frying-pan into the fire. It was a veritable hell, the flames were so fierce. Dragging the middy, I managed to get through the door to the fresh air, which was like heaven to me. Now my difficulties were increased. There seemed no way down to the sick bay. The only escape in the mess deck was in a mass of flames, and the rest of the hatches were battened down. However, I got the middy across the other side of the deck, in a more sheltered place, and there I must have fainted, as I remembered no more until I found myself in the surgeon's hands on a table in one of the messes. My head and neck were swathed in bandages. Then I learnt to my dismay that so far as we knew only one enemy ship had been sunk. This was a disappointment to me, as my recollection of the three other ships satisfied me that they were completely done for, as I thought was also the case with my own ship.”

Another splendid display of heroism was performed by a boy 1st Class. The periscope glasses of a turret became fogged by smoke and spray, and as it was eminently necessary for them to be cleaned a volunteer was asked for. Without further ado the lad climbed outside, perched himself on the turret, and did the necessary work. Then the firing began again, and

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nothing further was thought of the boy. He stopped in his dangerous position, keeping the glasses as bright as a new pin, until the action was over, then promptly reported. The coolness of the deed is accentuated by the fact that the incident occurred after the explosion of the shell in the control-tower, and following the death of Engineer-Captain C. G. Taylor and four stokers from a similar cause.

Despite her injuries, only one officer of the *Tiger* and nine men were killed, and three officers and eight men wounded—a comparatively light casualty list. The last shell fired by the *Blücher* struck the *Tiger*, but did little damage. Another made a hole in one of the turrets, and a third dented the side but failed to penetrate. A shell struck the deck, but glanced off on coming into contact with a steel beam and went overboard.

Probably one of the reasons why Pelly's ship was struck was because she bore the brunt of the enemy's fire when sheltering the *Lion* after she had been rendered *hors de combat*.

In due course the German Admiralty sank the *Tiger*, presumably as an offset to the loss of the *Blücher*. Credit for the performance was given to Lieutenant-Commander von Uchorn, of destroyer V5, "who launched torpedoes from a range of five miles, thus showing the exceptional qualities of the German torpedoes in range and good explosive powers."

Let us now try to picture the last few hours of the *Blücher's* career. This ship, the largest and most modern warship to be sunk since hostilities began, was a contemporary of the *Invincible* class, and at the outbreak of war flew the flag of Prince Henry of Prussia, who was in command of the German Baltic

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Fleet. While she was building the German Admiralty got a great deal of satisfaction in believing that the new ship would at least be a match for the Dreadnoughts then under construction in British yards. They thought they had discovered Lord Fisher's secret, and the *Blücher* was the result. She was laid down at Kiel in October 1906, and completed in September 1909 at a cost of £1,250,000. A formidable vessel beyond question, with her dozen 8·2-inch, eight 6-inch, and sixteen 24-pdr. guns, but the ship she was to match, and probably to outclass, proved to have an armament of eight 12-inch and sixteen 4-inch guns! There was bitter cursing in the Marineamt!

The following is the explanation of Count von Reventlow in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*: "The *Blücher* was laid down when the first English so-called Dreadnought cruisers of the *Invincible* type were in course of construction. The English Admiralty intentionally published false news about the size and the guns of these ships—especially the statement that the *Invincible* type would have a displacement of only 15,000 tons. Thereupon the plans of construction of the *Blücher* were settled upon the basis of a displacement of 16,000 tons. When it afterward turned out that the *Invincible* class had a displacement of over 20,000 tons and a heavy armament of eight 12-inch guns, no change was possible, and one could only take the *Blücher* as she was." The Count is wrong in one particular. The Admiralty did not publish false news; it maintained a policy of silence and refused to play into the hands of Germany. Both the policy and the type were amply vindicated in the North Sea action.

As we have seen, the *Blücher* was hammered by

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each British battle-cruiser in turn, and she also received attention from a number of destroyers. It says much for her builders that she kept afloat for so long. Her upper works were reduced to a state little better than the litter of a scrap-iron shop. The fore-turret was literally torn out of her and every member of the gun-crew was killed. She was on fire forward, and through several gaping holes in her side a dull red glow could be seen that was tangible evidence of the awful inferno within. Her aft turret continued to speak while she sank by the head.

Several ships claimed to have given the *coup de grâce* to the *Blücher*, which was game to the last. She put up a fine fight. There is little doubt, however, that the saucy *Arethusa* was responsible for the firing of the torpedo that actually sank her. She fired two torpedoes at 1,500 yards, which is considered a very near range at a ship practically at rest. The *Meteor* fired a torpedo at 5,000 yards, but it is very doubtful if it reached her, as it was probably set for high speed, which limits the range to under 4,000 yards. The survivors from the *Blücher* voluntarily stated that both the *Arethusa's* weapons hit. At the time the armoured cruiser was under a very heavy fire, so that it was difficult to distinguish between 'shots' from projectiles and the explosion of a torpedo, but the officers of the *Arethusa* were firmly convinced that they had made one hit. The enemy also fired a couple of torpedoes as Commodore Tyrwhitt's vessel approached, but neither hit.

"The spectacle just before she sank was a terrible one," says an officer of the *Arethusa*. "We had seen her fore-mast come crashing down, and now the whole vessel was wrapped in smoke, with flames showing fore

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and aft. Her gun-turrets and top works were ripped and battered, and she was an utter wreck. She heeled gradually over and sank lower and lower, and finally went under with a plunge and a swirl."

"You English have too many ships for us," a prisoner remarked. "We cannot do anything against you on sea. On the land, yes; on the sea, no." An officer who was picked up stated that within thirty minutes of the *Lion's* first hit from 200 to 300 of the crew had either been killed or wounded. The first words of the *Blücher's* engineer-commander on being rescued were, "Thank God I am out of that hell of fire!"

CHAPTER XXXII

‘The Day’ at Jutland

We drew the enemy into the jaws of our Fleet. I have no regrets except for the gallant comrades and all pals that have gone, who died gloriously.

BEATTY

THERE has been much controversy regarding the tactics of the battle of giants fought off Jutland on May 31, 1916. The all-important result of the engagement was that the German High Sea Fleet never again contested the British command of the sea. The Dreadnoughts which the Germans had so often stated were “skulking among the reeds of Ireland” were in undisputed possession. With half a dozen battle-cruisers and four of the latest battleships of the *Queen Elizabeth* class, the *Barham*, the *Valiant*, the *Warspite*, and the *Malaya*, under Rear-Admiral Hugh Evan-Thomas, accompanied by fourteen light cruisers and twenty-seven destroyers, Beatty was at sea in accordance with orders from the commander-in-chief, who had received intelligence that the German fleet was on the move. Late in the day he sighted Vice-Admiral von Hipper’s advance squadron of five battle-cruisers and attendant craft bent on an attack on the cruisers and merchantmen in and outside the Skagerrak. Beatty was then proceeding northward to join the Battle Fleet. Hipper immediately altered course to the south-east to come up with Scheer’s main body, and Beatty manœuvred

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to place his vessels between the enemy and his base. Both sides opened fire almost at the same moment at a range of about 18,500 yards—over ten miles—which was gradually decreased, and the action was sustained with vigour. At first the gunnery of the German battle-cruisers was “of a very high standard,” says Jellicoe, and although there was subsequently a falling off, their ships were “still able to fire with great accuracy” even when they had been severely punished. The *Indefatigable* was struck by the *Derfflinger*, and blew up. There was also a simultaneous torpedo-attack, the British intercepting a light cruiser and fifteen destroyers. In the ensuing engagement, fought at close quarters, two German destroyers were sunk, the attack on the big ships was prevented, and the enemy were forced to fall back on their battle-cruisers. The British lost no vessels, and although several destroyers had fallen astern in the fight, seven pressed home their attack on the enemy battle-cruisers. Of these, three sustained a terrific fire from battleships at close range, two being lost.

Meanwhile the battle-cruisers continued to be heavily engaged, the conflict being “of a very fierce and resolute character.” The enemy battleships were also taking part in the struggle at long range. The accurate and rapid fire of the British was now in marked superiority to that of their opponents, despite reduced visibility. The third ship in the enemy’s line was seen to be on fire. This triumph, however, was poor compensation for a heavy score on the opposite side. A shell hit the *Queen Mary*, on which the *Derfflinger* and the *Seydlitz* had concentrated, and exploded her magazine.

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The guns of this great battle-cruiser had not begun to bark and bite until 4.53 p.m. From start to finish they kept up a steady fire. Not quite half an hour later a big shell hit one of the turrets and put a gun out of action. Two explosions followed, leaving nothing but a mass of wreckage to mark the graves of 1,200 heroes. "She broke up and sank," said an eyewitness, "in a wild confusion of red glare and smoke so thick that it looked solid, and a terrific thunder-clap of an explosion that sounded loud above the steady roar of the guns."

A gun-layer who also saw what happened stated that "every shell that the Germans threw seemed suddenly to strike the battle-cruiser at once. It was as if a whirlpool was smashing a forest down, and reminded me very much of the rending that is heard when a big vessel is launched and the stays are being smashed. She seemed to roll slowly to starboard, her mast and funnels gone, and with a huge hole in her side. She listed again, the hole disappeared beneath the water, which rushed into her and turned her completely over. A minute and a half, and all that could be seen of the *Queen Mary* was her keel, and then that disappeared."

When the enemy's Battle Fleet was sighted Beatty altered course northward to lead the Germans toward Jellicoe's main force. Evan-Thomas's Fifth Battle Squadron supported the battle-cruisers "brilliantly and effectively," and came under the fire of Scheer's leading ships, now obscured by mist, while the British vessels were silhouetted against a clear horizon. The atmospheric conditions were therefore somewhat similar to those against which Cradock had to contend off Coronel when the sun had set. For an hour the range

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was reduced to 14,000 yards, during which time the Germans “received very severe punishment,” one of their battle-cruisers being compelled to haul out of the line badly crippled, while others “showed signs of increasing injury.” At 5.56 p.m. Jellicoe’s leading ships were sighted on the port bow. Beatty altered course to the east, reducing the range by another 2,000 yards.

This reinforcement, consisting of Hood’s Third Battle-Cruiser Squadron, took stations ahead, closing with the leading German ship at 8,000 yards. The *Invincible*, severely punishing her opponent, was struck in a vital spot and disappeared. “While we were at it the gunnery was magnificent,” was the verdict of a survivor who was picked up by a destroyer. Then came a shell that tore a great gaping hole in one of her turrets. Apparently it found its way down the open ammunition-hoist and exploded the magazine. Sturdee’s former flagship just broke in halves and sank in a welter of oil.

Beatty then went in support, Hood’s two remaining vessels being ordered to support the line astern. The light shortly afterward changed in favour of the British. “At intervals,” says Beatty in his dispatch, “their [the enemy’s] ships showed up clearly, enabling us to punish them very severely and establish a definite superiority over them.” So great was the execution that the German line “was crumpled up, leaving battleships as targets for the majority of our battle-cruisers,” while Evan-Thomas also engaged battleships. Yet before Jellicoe’s ‘heavy fathers’ were in line the *Defence* blew up, the *Warrior* was disabled, the *Invincible* was a total wreck, and the *Marlborough* was torpedoed, though still able to fight.

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The *Warrior* proved worthy of the name she bore. She gave no quarter in her last feverish half-hour of crowded life. The cruiser entered into action just before six o'clock, and the third shell that left the starboard gun of the fore-turret crumpled up the third funnel of an enemy cruiser nearly 16,000 yards away. Then 12-inch shells began to make their presence known and felt, many falling into the sea, a few taking deadly effect. Again and again the captain altered her course, thereby avoiding the full force of the terrible storm of steel. The dynamos were put out of action, a shell tore through the deck and played havoc in the engine-room, and the stokeholds were flooded. Soon the after part of the ship was in flames, and she was leaking badly. While some of the crew tried with feverish energy to keep the fire under, others prepared for the order "Abandon ship," which now seemed inevitable. She retired from the line in a sinking condition, covered by the *Warspite*, which passed between her and the enemy and continued the fighting to much advantage. Like the heroine who fought for her children when the dervishes entered Khartoum and murdered Gordon, the battleship put her great steel body directly in opposition to the enemy.

Eventually the fire in the *Warrior* was got under control, and something was done to reduce the intake of water, for she was badly holed below. There seemed a chance of saving her, and the chance was seized. A hawser was thrown from another ship and made fast. The *Warrior* lumbered on for ten hours, making a distance of less than fifty miles. After a night of tugging and straining, during which calm weather gave place to an ugly sea, the cruiser settled

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down until the quarterdecks were awash. Then, and not till then, was she abandoned.

“The *Defence*,” an eyewitness writes, “had got well over toward the enemy, engaging their light cruisers, and had sunk one, when through the mist emerged the enemy battleships. An armoured cruiser could not stand long against them, for it is not made for it. There was a tremendous splash of zig-zag yellow smoke, and an enormous mass of dark grey smoke, in shape like a tremendous elm-tree, shot up to the sky. She was gone, all in a minute—admiral, captain, ship’s company, ship. Not a sign of the *Defence* left—not one soul of that fine lot of men!”

The *Black Prince* was sunk later. “Two great shells,” says a gunnery-officer, “carried away her funnels and fore-turret, a salvo hit her in the magazine, and she blew up.”

What shall we say of those wonderful units of the Black Navy, the destroyers? Greater praise cannot be given than this, that they carried out what was expected of them with amazing zeal. There is no finer tale of the sea than the one which the survivors of the *Shark* had to tell. Two columns of German destroyers were rushing ahead. She steered between them, torpedoed a craft on either beam, and kept up a running and merciless fire until a shell exploded on the forecastle, killing everybody there; a second shell smashed one of the propellers and damaged the steering-gear, while a third penetrated the oil-tank. Pretty well everything on deck was carried away, and dozens of men lay dead. She was herself struck on both bows by torpedoes. Commander Loftus W. Jones, with one of his legs shot away above the

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knee, was firing the only gun that had not been put out of action as the vessel foundered.

The *Onslaught*, tearing along at top speed, dashed up to an enemy battleship, discharged a couple of torpedoes into her great bulky mass, and sank her. The pygmy had conquered the giant. True, she suffered for it, but brave hearts recked not of suffering and death on craft such as these and sister destroyers—the *Fortune*, the *Acasta*, and the rest. “Theirs but to do and die.”

A German submarine was sent to Davy Jones’s locker, thanks to the splendid handling of a sleek destroyer. She was in the thick of the fight when one of those men who from long experience know the meaning of almost every ripple on the water made out the track of a torpedo. The ship answered her helm instantly, otherwise there would be a destroyer less in the British Navy to-day. She swung round with the ease of a racing yacht in the Solent, and the submerged dart sped harmlessly by. Then the commander steered a course in the direction from whence the torpedo had come. There was no time lost, for submarines are as slippery as eels. It could have come from no other type of ship, because none was sufficiently near at the moment. The T.B.D. raced along at 30 knots, paying less heed to the fire that was concentrated on her by two ships than to a suspicious foam ahead. It flung away the foam when it got up to it, and the muffled sound of tearing metal reached the ears of the men on the destroyer.

The Grand Fleet was approaching in six parallel columns of four ships each. To bring them into a single line it was necessary to deploy. This having been accomplished, the German destroyers attacked,

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and in order to avoid the torpedoes the British commander-in-chief turned his battle-squadrons two points to port, away from the weapons of destruction, and as he did not deem that a sufficient margin for safety, a further turn of two points was ordered. The manœuvre was successful, and twenty or more torpedoes were observed to pass the ships. It is argued that precious time was lost during this movement, which opened the range and enabled Scheer to alter course and flee. Had Jellicoe turned to starboard, as certain critics have suggested he ought to have done, he might have involved Britain in ruin. “The last consideration present in my mind,” he writes, “was the danger involved in leaving too much to chance in a Fleet action, because our Fleet was the one and only factor that was vital to the existence of the Empire, as, indeed, to the Allied cause. We had no reserve outside the Battle Fleet which could in any way take its place should disaster befall it, or even should its margin of superiority over the enemy be eliminated.” Mr Filson Young tells us that when Jellicoe and Beatty indulged in manœuvres the latter launched destroyer attacks, and to avoid them the commander-in-chief “invariably employed the method of turning his ships away. I remember,” he adds, “that the first time I saw this happen from the bridge of the *Lion* a staff officer near me said: ‘If he does that when the Germans attack he can’t be defeated, but he can’t win.’”

“The action between the battle-fleets,” Jellicoe notes in his official dispatch, “lasted intermittently from 6.17 p.m. to 8.20 p.m. at ranges between 9,000 and 12,000 yards, during which time the British Fleet made alterations of course from S.E. by E. to W. in

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the endeavour to close. The enemy constantly turned away and opened the range under cover of destroyer attacks and smoke-screens as the effect of the British fire was felt, and the alterations of course had the effect of bringing the British Fleet (which commenced the action in a position of advantage on the bow of the enemy) to a quarterly bearing from the enemy battle-line, but at the same time placed us between the enemy and his bases. . . . During the somewhat brief periods that the ships of the High Sea Fleet were visible through the mist the heavy and effective fire kept up by the battleships and battle-cruisers of the Grand Fleet caused me much satisfaction, and the enemy vessels were seen to be constantly hit, some being observed to haul out of the line and at least one to sink. The enemy's return fire at this period was not effective, and the damage caused to our ships was insignificant."

As soon as Commodore Reginald Tyrwhitt learned that a battle was in progress he left Harwich with all his available destroyers. Unaware at the time that the whole of the High Sea Fleet was out, the squadrons were recalled by the Admiralty for service should the German movement be merely a feint to cover a larger operation. "They would have been of great use on June 1st," Jellicoe has since admitted, "had they been on the scene at that time, and it is needless to add how much I would have welcomed the participation of the Harwich force in the action had circumstances admitted of this."

During the night the commander-in-chief sought to place his fleet between the enemy and their base, but by steering in three divisions behind the Grand Fleet they contrived to escape in a badly mauled condition.

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Several times during the dark hours the Germans were within an ace of being brought to battle. The cruiser *Champion* was in action with four enemy destroyers for a few minutes, the *Moresby* sighted four battleships, the *Obdurate* mistook several light cruisers for units of the British Fleet, and the *Faulknor* and her consorts not only attacked several battleships, but signalled the *Iron Duke*, which failed to receive the message.

The battle of Jutland conclusively proved that the German ships were more efficiently protected, and their gunners provided with better armour-piercing projectiles. Both these very serious defects were afterward remedied. Of the battleships, the *Marlborough* was not hit by shell, but torpedoed under the fore-bridge, the *Barham* was hit twice, the *Colossus* three times, and the *Malaya* eight times; of the battle-cruisers, the *Lion* was struck twelve times, the *Princess Royal* nine times, the *Tiger* four times, and the *New Zealand* and the *Indomitable* once; of the light cruisers, the *Castor*, the *Dublin*, and the *Calliope* were hit in several places, the *Chester* seventeen times, the *Falmouth*, the *Galatea*, and the *Canterbury* once.

The British lost six big ships and eight destroyers, the complete force consisting of twenty-four Dreadnoughts, ten attached cruisers, eight battle-cruisers, twelve light cruisers, eight vessels of the First and Second Cruiser Squadrons, six ships of the Light-Cruiser Squadron, and seventy-eight destroyers. Out of a total of twenty-five German battleships (including seventeen Dreadnoughts), five battle-cruisers, eleven light cruisers, and seventy-seven destroyers, twelve battleships, all the battle-cruisers, and ten light cruisers were hit or sustained damage by splinters of

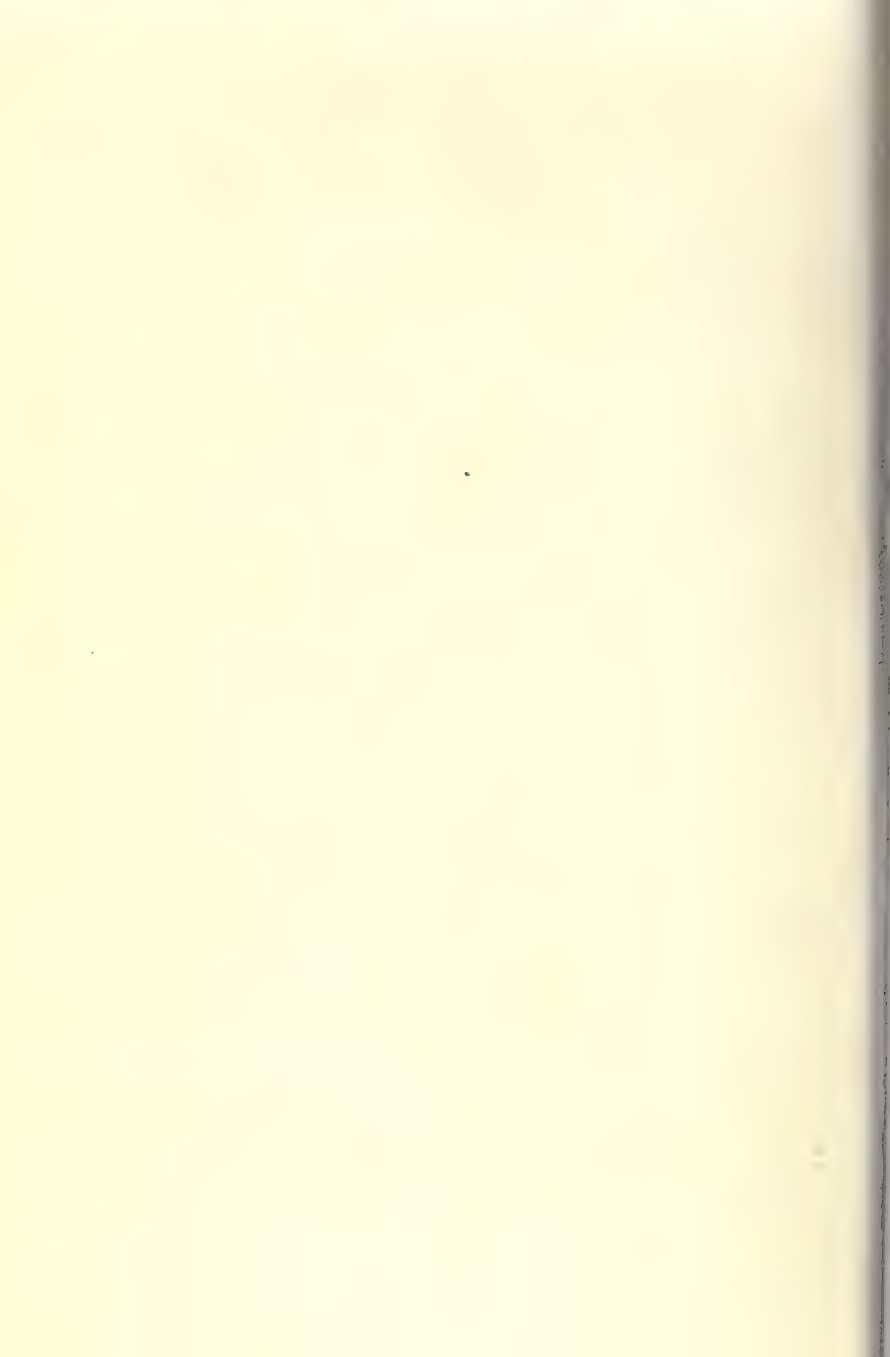
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bursting shell. The *Ostfriesland*, a battleship, was mined, but able to enter harbour without assistance, and the *König* badly battered. Of the battle-cruisers, the *Lützow* was hit at least forty times, torpedoed twice, and finally destroyed by her crew when in a sinking condition; the *Seydlitz* was hit by twenty-eight shells and one torpedo, and had to be beached in the Outer Jade, preparatory to getting her into dock. The *Derfflinger* took several months to repair, and the *Moltke* and *Von der Tann* were hit. Four light cruisers, five destroyers, and one submarine were sunk. The casualties of the enemy numbered 3,076, including 2,414 killed or missing, while 5,241 British officers and men lost their lives—nearly twelve times as many as at Trafalgar. Rear-Admirals Hood and Arbuthnot were numbered among the gallant dead. While the British had a large force, the Germans actually had more vessels in action than Jellicoe. Although no statistics are available of the total number of rounds fired by the Grand Fleet, 1,186 shells were fired by the eight ships of the First Battle Squadron alone.

In a letter written by Admiral von Scheer to the Kaiser on the 4th of the following July he categorically stated that "there can be no doubt that even the most favourable issue of a battle on the high seas will not compel England to make peace in this war. . . . A victorious termination of the war within measurable time can only be attained by destroying the economic existence of Great Britain, namely, by the employment of submarines against British commerce. In the conviction that it is my duty, I must continue respectfully to dissuade your Majesty from adopting any modified form of this warfare, because



A SUBMARINE OF THE E CLASS, WITH DEPOT SHIP



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it would mean reducing this weapon to an anomaly, and because the results would probably not be in proportion to the risk incurred by the boats. Further, even with the most conscientious care on the part of the commanding officers, it will be impossible to avoid incidents in British waters, where American interests are so prevalent, which will force us to humiliating concessions, unless we are able to prosecute the submarine campaign in its acutest form.”

On August 19th the German squadrons again appeared in the North Sea, but speedily returned to port on discovering that the British were in considerable strength. On this occasion two light cruisers, the *Nottingham* and the *Falmouth*, were torpedoed by submarine.

CHAPTER XXXIII

War in the Underseas

The submarine has robbed the stronger Navy of its power to carry warfare close up to the enemy's coasts and harbours.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

DURING the last two years of the conflict no great naval battle was fought. Action was principally confined to the realm of the underseas. The problem of the submarine was tackled in such a businesslike way that it completely shattered the faith of the enemy in that weapon. Germany had openly boasted of the impossibility of landing an American army in France. The transports would be stalked and sunk long before they reached Europe. On the outward voyage two vessels only were sunk, and less than 300 troops were lost. Of the 2,000,000 soldiers who went from America to France, over 50 per cent. passed through England, sometimes at the rate of 200,000 a month.

The convoying of merchantmen also proved extremely valuable, though from first to last Britain lost 7,638,020 tons of shipping and France 696,845 tons. Zeebrugge, from which issued raiding destroyers and U-boats, was sealed on April 23, 1918, by the sinking in the fairway of three obsolete cruisers loaded with concrete. At the same time a cutting-out expedition landed from the *Vindictive* and wrought considerable damage by destroying gun-emplacements and firing

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buildings, while an old submarine filled with explosives was blown up, and destroyed the jetty connecting the mole with the mainland. An attempt made at the same time to block Ostend miscarried, but was achieved by the battle-scarred *Vindictive* on the 10th of the following May.

Toward the end the *moral* of the German High Sea Fleet broke down, which is another way of saying that it lost its nerve. When ordered to put to sea on October 28, 1918, ostensibly for manœuvres, but in reality as a gambler's last hazardous throw of the dice, the men mutinied in a far more thorough manner than had obtained a few months previously. At Wilhelmshaven about a thousand sailors were imprisoned for taking part; Kiel went wholly 'red,' as did also the commercial ports of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck. Soviets came into being, a Workers' and Soldiers' Council was formed, Bolshevism was openly preached, and fireworks were let off at Wilhelmshaven in honour of the German Republic.

Apart from the moral issue, three main causes led to the defection of the German Navy. It did not fight because the battle of Jutland had proved the vast superiority of the Grand Fleet; it did not want to fight because the complements of the vessels were mainly landsmen by upbringing and inclination; it had no heart to fight because the U-boat campaign had failed to win the war according to promise, or even to shake Britain's resolution by one iota. Probably the ultimate and determining factor was the frightful mortality among the submersibles. When the High Sea Fleet failed at Jutland the U-boat campaign was undertaken in real earnest; when that failed the mutiny took place. The death-rate toward

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the end was frightful. Of 360 submarines launched during 1914-18, 203 were sunk or captured. Britain lost fifty-nine submarines.

That Germany made a bold bid for triumph cannot be gainsaid. There were times when the Allied Admiralties regarded the situation as critical. The statistics of the matter are instructive, though not pleasing. From first to last Great Britain lost 9,000,000 tons of shipping, while Allies and neutrals suffered to the extent of a further 6,000,000 tons. In addition there were eighty British vessels, with an aggregate tonnage of 172,554, held up in German ports during hostilities, an amount by no means to be despised, although it is small compared with the enemy tonnage captured and brought into Allied service. The latter reached the respectable figure of 2,392,675. British naval casualties totalled 39,766 in killed, wounded, interned, and captured. In the Merchant Service 14,661 lost their lives and 3,295 were taken prisoners. War in the underseas was waged at frightful cost to all belligerents, both vanquished and victors. Taking British losses by enemy action and marine risks during the war, the worst quarters were in this order: second quarter of 1917, third, first, and last quarters of the same year, first quarter of 1918, and last quarter of 1916. In April 1917 550,000 tons of British shipping were sent to the bottom. In September 1918 the depletion had been reduced to 151,000 tons.

Captain Persius asserts that, following the action off the Danish coast, twenty-three battleships were disarmed for the purpose of obtaining metal for constructing U-boats—excellent proof of the grip of the blockade and of the British victory at Jutland. His

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figures regarding underseas craft are a little difficult to follow, because he only deals with what he calls 'front submarines,' presumably those definitely on active service and not merely patrolling in home waters. In April 1917, he says, Germany had 126 U-boats, in the following October 146; in February 1918 she possessed 136; in June of the same year, 113. In January 1917 only 12 per cent. were at sea, 30 per cent. in harbour, 38 per cent. under repair, and 20 per cent. incapacitated. His most important admission is that the ill-trained crews had no confidence in their craft, and that toward the end of the campaign it was difficult to get men to work them. He flatly contradicts the assertion that losses were made up by new construction.

Apart from the offensive operations of the Navy proper, the defensive equipment of traders and the introduction of the convoy system in the summer of 1917 were of enormous importance in thwarting the submarine. In addition to merchant-shipping and munitions, 16,000,000 fighting-men were escorted, and of these less than 5,000 met with disaster.

Sea-power worked miracles in other directions. "The blockade," according to Sir Eric Geddes, "is what crushed the life out of the Central Empires." That was the work of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron. From 1914 to 1917 the ships of that squadron "held the 800-miles stretch of grey sea from the Orkneys to Iceland. In those waters they intercepted 15,000 ships taking succour to our enemies, and they did that almost under Arctic conditions, and mainly in the teeth of storm and blizzard; out of that 15,000 they missed just 4 per cent., a most remarkable achievement under impossible conditions. Behind the

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blockade was the Grand Fleet, the fulcrum of the whole of the sea-power of the Allies. If ever testimony were needed of the value of sea-power, I can give it. In every individual case when an armistice was signed by our enemies, and in one, if not two, cases before, the one cry that went up was, 'Release the blockade.'"

Admiral Sir Percy Scott holds that four years of U-boat warfare have "tragically demonstrated the truth" of his neglected warning, but he also acknowledges that the Navy did not fail us. "From the first," to quote the apostle of the submarines, "Great Britain kept command of the seas." His prophecy of 1914 that the day of the big surface-ship was over has not been fulfilled, though the submarine may become the capital ship of the future. He contends that if Germany could have placed 200 U-boats on the ocean trade-routes at the outbreak of war she would have defeated the Allies. She might have done so, but the important fact is that she did not possess the requisite number. At that time we were lamentably short of light craft, German cruisers and raiders were running amok in various parts of the world, and the Grand Fleet was fully occupied 'containing' the main German squadrons. Given the hypothetical conditions mentioned by the Admiral, it is not improbable that the enemy would "have defeated the Allies and practically conquered the world," but it is not "certain," as Sir Percy asserts. Germany regarded the intensified U-boat campaign as a sure thing; we know the result. In his now famous letter to *The Times*, one of the eminent correspondent's contentions was that "the introduction of vessels that swim under water has already done away with the utility of ships that swim on the top of the water,"

War in the Underseas

that "as the motor-vehicle has driven the horse from the road, so has the submarine driven the battleship from the sea." The Great War of 1914-18 disproved this very definite statement, and witnessed the introduction of mighty 'hush' ships which lived, and moved, and had their being on the surface of great waters.

On the other hand we should be extremely foolish if we neglected the lessons of the war as regards the latest naval arm. The records of British submarines are eloquent of their effectiveness. Summed up they amount to this: Two battleships sunk and three badly damaged; two armoured cruisers destroyed; two light cruisers sunk and one badly damaged. The long obituary list also included seven destroyers, five gunboats, twenty submarines, five armed auxiliaries, fourteen transports, two store-ships, half a dozen ammunition- and supply-ships, fifty-three steamships, 197 sailing-vessels, and one Zeppelin, making a grand total of 315 vessels dead and buried. As to the sea-going qualities of the craft, one British commander made twenty-four cruises, covering 22,000 miles, in a year, while in a single month British submarines navigated 105,768 sea-miles, one mile in every ten being in the submerged position. Allied naval losses, while they made no appreciable difference to the situation, were not negligible. Approximately 230 fighting-ships were lost from all causes by Great Britain during the war. Fifteen battleships, five battle-cruisers, twenty-eight light cruisers, 176 destroyers, and 110 submarines were built.

All available facts show that warships travelling at a good speed are comparatively immune from attack by submarine. There is also little danger when they are going slowly, provided they have a covering screen

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of destroyers. The majority of battleships and cruisers that fell victims to U-boats were taking life easy, as for instance the *Aboukir*, the *Cressy*, and the *Hogue* in the North Sea, and the *Formidable* in the Channel.

The Great Collapse revealed no new wonders. One ugly brute, believed to have been responsible for the sinking of 47,000 tons of shipping, carried forty-two mines and twenty-two torpedoes. An officer explained that his periscope was missing and his compass gave an incorrect reading because a steamer had 'sat' on his boat. The majority of the submarines surrendered were certainly not of the cruiser type about which one heard so much during the war. The largest U-boat was 320 feet long, with a surface displacement of 2,160 tons, and an armament of two 5·9-inch guns and six torpedo-tubes. Accommodation was provided for a crew of eighty-three. The remainder were mostly of 800 tons displacement, 225 feet long, and 22 feet beam.

Eleven German battleships, five battle-cruisers, eight light cruisers, and fifty destroyers were surrendered shortly after the Armistice, most of them being subsequently scuttled at Scapa by their crews. No fewer than 158 submarines were also given up. Under the terms of the Peace Treaty eight battleships, eight light cruisers, forty-two destroyers, and fifty torpedo-boats were handed over. Two battleships and two battle-cruisers on the stocks were also to be surrendered or broken up.

Ten centuries had gone in the making of the British Navy; it took four and a half years for the senior service to secure the defeat of its most formidable rival in the greatest sea-conquest of all time.

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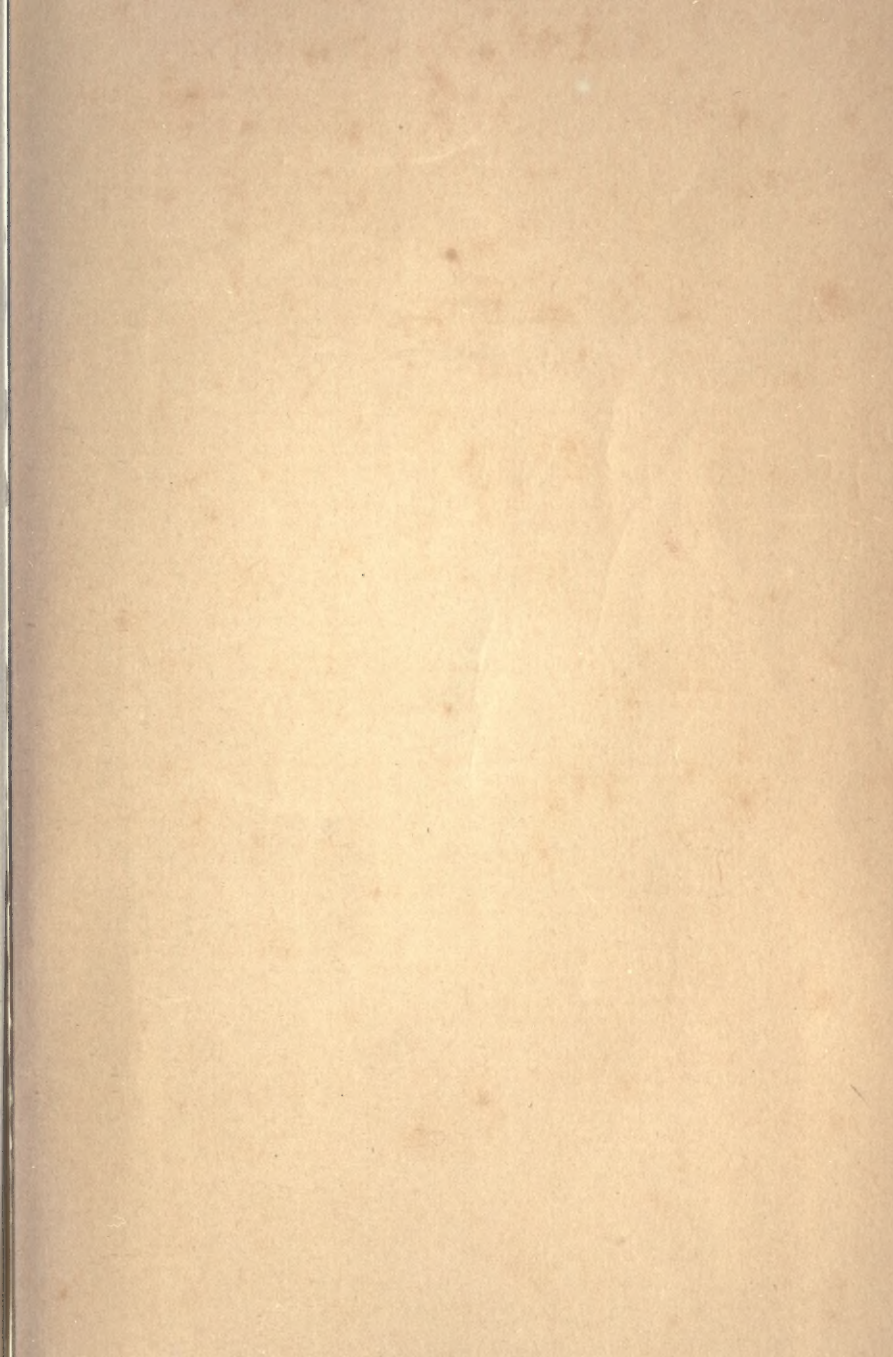
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